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THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT  
OF THE GREEKS



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# THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF THE GREEKS

FROM HOMER TO THE TRIUMPH  
OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

CLIFFORD HERSCHEL MOORE

PROFESSOR IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

*SECOND EDITION*



*Paul Schubert*

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TO MY WIFE

15094



## PREFACE

**I**N this book eight lectures given before the Lowell Institute in Boston during the late autumn of 1914 are combined with material drawn from a course of lectures delivered the previous spring before the Western Colleges with which Harvard University maintains an annual exchange — Beloit, Carleton, Colorado, Grinnell, and Knox. The lecture form has been kept, even at the cost of occasional repetition.

The purpose of these lectures is to present within a moderate compass an historical account of the progress of Greek religious thought through something over a thousand years. No attempt has been made to give a general treatment of Greek religion, or to deal with pre-Hellenic origins, with religious antiquities, or with mythology. The discussions are confined rather to the Greeks' ideas about the nature of the gods, and to their concepts of the relations between gods and men and of men's obligations toward the divine. The lectures therefore deal with the higher ranges of Greek thought and at times have much to do with philosophy and theology.

Yet I have felt free to interpret my subject liberally, and, so far as space allowed, I have touched on whatever seemed to me most significant. Ethics has been included without hesitation, for the Greeks themselves, certainly from the fifth century B.C., regarded morals as closely connected with religion. A treatment of the



oriental religions seemed desirable, since the first two centuries and a half of our era cannot be understood if these religions are left out of account. Still more necessary was it to include Christianity. In my handling of this I have discussed the teachings of Jesus and of Paul with comparative fullness, in order to set forth clearly the material which later under the influence of secular thought was transformed into a philosophic system. Origen and Plotinus represent the culmination of Greek religious philosophy.

Such a book as this can be nothing more than a sketch; in it the scholar will miss many topics which might well have been included. Of such omissions I am fully conscious; but limitations of subject and of space forced me to select those themes which seemed most significant in the development of the religious ideas of the ancient world.

It is not possible for me to acknowledge all my obligations to others. I wish, however, to express here my gratitude to Professor C. P. Parker, who has shared his knowledge of Plato with me; to Professor J. H. Ropes, who has helped me on many points in my last two lectures, where I especially needed an expert's aid; and to Professor C. N. Jackson, who has read the entire book in manuscript and by his learning and judgment has made me his constant debtor. The criticism which these friends have given me has been of the greatest assistance even when I could not accept their views; and none of them is responsible for my statements.

The translations of Aeschylus are by A. S. Way, Macmillan, 1906-08; those of Euripides are from the same skilled hand, in the Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1912; for Sophocles I have drawn on the version by Lewis Campbell, Kegan Paul, Trench and Company, 1883; and for Thucydides and Plato I have used the classic renderings of Jowett with slight modifications in one or two passages.

In an appendix will be found selected bibliographies for each lecture. To these lists I have admitted, with one or two exceptions, only such books as I have found useful from actual experience; and few articles in periodicals have been named.

CLIFFORD HERSCHEL MOORE.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

August 1, 1916.

## PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN preparing the second edition I have thought it wise to make no important change in the character of this book. I have therefore contented myself with correcting errors and modifying a few statements.

C. H. M.

November 1, 1924.





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THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT  
OF THE GREEKS



## I

### HOMER AND HESIOD

“**H**OMER and Hesiod created the generations of the gods for the Greeks; they gave the divinities their names, assigned to them their prerogatives and functions, and made their forms known.” So Herodotus describes the service of these poets to the centuries that followed them.<sup>1</sup> But the modern historian of Greek religion cannot accept the statement of the father of history as wholly satisfactory: he knows that the excavations of the last forty years have revealed to us civilizations of the third and second millennia before Christ, the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures, of which the historical Greeks were hardly conscious, but which nevertheless made large contributions to religion in the period after Homer. Yet at the most the Mycenaean and Minoan Ages were for the Greek of the sixth and fifth centuries only a kind of dim background for the remote history of his race. The Homeric poems represented for him the earliest stage of Hellenic social life and religion. We are justified then in taking the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as starting points in our present considera-

<sup>1</sup> Herod. 2, 53.



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tions. These matchless epics cast an ineffable spell over the imaginations of the Greeks themselves and influenced religion hardly less than literature.

It is obvious that in this course of lectures we cannot consider together all the multitudinous phases of Greek religion: it will be impossible to discuss those large primitive elements in the practices and beliefs of the ancient Greek folk which are so attractive to many students of religion today, for these things were, by and large, only survivals from a ruder past and did not contribute to the religious progress from age to age; nor can we rehearse the details of worship, or review all the varieties of religious belief which we find in different places and in successive centuries; still less can we concern ourselves with mythology. Alluring as these things are they do not concern our present purpose. I shall invite you rather to trace with me the development of Greek religious thought through something over a thousand years, from the period of the Homeric poems to the triumph of Christianity. In such a survey we must be occupied for the most part with the larger movements and the higher ranges of Greek thought, with the advance which was made from century to century; and we shall try to see how each stage of religious development came to fruition in the next period. To accomplish this purpose we must take into due account the social, economic, and political changes in the Greek world which influenced the course of Hellenic thinking. Ultimately, if our study is successful, we shall have discovered in some measure, I trust, what permanent con-

tributions the Greeks made to our own religious ideas. With these things in mind, therefore, let us return to the Homeric Poems.

Whatever the date at which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* received their final form, the common view that they belong to a period somewhere between 850 and 750 B.C. is substantially correct. They represent the culmination of a long period of poetic development and picture so to speak on one canvas scenes and deeds from many centuries. Yet the composite life is wrought by poetic art into one splendid whole, so that the ordinary reader, in antiquity as today, was unconscious of the variety and contradictions in the poems; only the analytic mind of the scholar detects the traces of the varied materials which the epic poet made his own. It is important that we should realize the fact that the Homeric poems made the impression of a consistent unity upon the popular mind in antiquity, for the influence of these epics through the recitations of rhapsodes at great public festivals and through their use in school was enormous. The statement of Herodotus, with which I began, was very largely true.

These poems were composed to be recited at the courts of princes in Ionia for the entertainment of the nobles at the banquet or after the feast was over. This purpose naturally influenced the poet in depicting life and religion, for the incidents chosen, the adventures recounted, all the life represented, of necessity had to be consonant with the interests and life of the bard's audience. His lays were for the ears of men who had not yet

lost the consciousness that they were in a new land, who knew that they were living in stirring times, and who feeling the spirit of adventure still fresh within them responded joyously to tales of heroic combat. This fact explains in part why it is that we find so little that is primitive or savage in Homer. Such elements were deliberately left out by the bard as unsuited to his audience; he chose to neglect them, not because of any antagonism toward them, but because they did not agree with his artistic aim. Again, the antiquity of the themes, even at the time of composition, made a freedom and picturesqueness of treatment possible, which a narrative of contemporaneous events could never have possessed. Furthermore since the peoples of Ionia, on migrating from the mainland of Greece, had left behind their sacred places and had carried with them their gods, severed from their ancient homes, the epic poet could treat religion with a liberty and could exercise a freedom of selection among the divinities, could use his poetic imagination to modify forms and to emphasize certain attributes, as he never could have done if singing for a people long resident in an ancient home where their gods had been localized and fixed in character time out of mind. A poet singing of Hera in the Argolid would have found himself bound by the traditions of the Heraeum where the goddess had been domiciled from prehistoric time, but the Homeric bard in Ionia was under no such limitation.

Therefore we find that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* present to us a picture of life and religion composed of selected

elements and so universalized that it was understood everywhere and at all later times. Exactly as the Homeric dialect, probably never spoken in any place or period, was universally comprehended, so the contents of the poems seemed nothing strange or difficult to audiences in the remotest parts of the Greek world; in the Greek colonies in Sicily, along the western shores of the Mediterranean, or on the borders of the Black Sea, the epic tales were as easily understood as at Delos, Olympia, or Athens.

Yet we have no warrant for using the Homeric poems as sources for the full history of Greek religion in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. We must remember that the epic bard was least of all composing systematic treatises about religion; on the contrary he was narrating heroic tales, such as the wrath of Achilles, the death of Hector and the ransoming of his body, and the return of Odysseus; he introduced the gods solely as mighty actors in the struggles and adventures of his mortal heroes. The divinities who play their parts in the *Iliad*, for example, were summoned, like the Achaean princes, so to speak, from many places to take part in the combat before Troy, and in the *Odyssey* only those gods appear who are required by the story. In short, the poet used the gods and religion exactly as he used his other materials, drawing from a great stock of beliefs and practices that which suited his tale, disregarding all the rest, and troubling little about consistency. Homer's aim, like that of most poets, was primarily artistic and least of all didactic.



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Furthermore every reader of the Homeric epics is struck by the freshness of the treatment; indeed, scholars of an earlier day thought that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were the first fruits of European poetic inspiration. Today we know that Homer represents the culmination of a long line of bards, that his artistry was won by effort and was not simply the incredible inspiration of one untaught; but this knowledge does not diminish in the slightest degree our appreciation of the freshness and directness of treatment which that art realized. These qualities are obtained in part by a freedom from reflection, by a lack of self-consciousness in the poems: They do not deal with the origin of the gods, they present no theogonies, any more than they concern themselves with the descent of man. It is true that Zeus is the son of Cronos, as Hera is the daughter of Cronos and Rhea, and that it is said that Zeus drove Cronos beneath the earth and sea, but we have no account of the rule of the elder gods or of the struggle by which Zeus won his place. For the epic poet the world of gods, men, and nature simply is; he does not indulge in speculation himself nor does he make his heroes debate questions of whence or whither; the living present with its actions, its struggles, victories, and defeats filled the compass of the poet's thought and of his audience's desire.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* then must not be considered as treatises or as reflective and philosophical works. This elementary point must be emphasized here, for there is always danger of losing the true perspective when we are considering a single theme. The



poems derive their great significance for the history of Greek religion from the fact that through recitations they became the chief popular literature of Greece, and that from the sixth century they were the basis of education, as I have already said. Thus they were universally known and universally influential; they created a common Olympic religion beside the local religions; and through the individualities which they gave the gods they fixed the types which poets were to recall and which artists were to embody in marble or in wood, ivory, and gold at the centers of the Greek world.

With these facts in mind we may ask what are the nature and characteristics of the gods in Homer. Excavations have shown us that the Mycenaean Age had already passed beyond the ruder stages and had conceived some at least of its divinities in anthropomorphic fashion. In Homer the gods are frankly made in man's image. They are beings larger, wiser, and stronger than mortals; they have a superhuman but not complete control over nature and mankind. Their chief preëminence over man lies in this superior power and in the possession of immortality as well as of that eternal youth and beauty which is appropriate to immortals. In their veins flows a divine ichor instead of blood; their food and drink are not the bread and wine which mortals need. Yet for all this they are hardly more independent of physical needs than men: they must sleep and eat, and they need the light of the sun. The passions hold sway over them to such an extent that the morality of the gods, of Zeus in particular, is distinctly inferior to

that of mortal princes. The divinities can suffer pain and indignities. Diomedes was able to wound both Aphrodite and Ares, whereat the valiant god of war bawled out as loud, the poet says, "as nine or ten thousand men shout in battle," and fled into the broad heaven to appeal to Zeus.<sup>1</sup> In the twenty-first book of the *Iliad* Athena hits Ares in the neck with a large boundary stone and overthrows him, adding insult to injury by laughing merrily at the god's discomfiture; then when Aphrodite would lead him off groaning, Athena hurries after and with a blow of her stout hand lays goddess and god prostrate on the ground.<sup>2</sup> Nor are the gods more just and honorable than men; they are moved by caprice; and their godhead does not prevent their quarreling or making up their differences in very human fashion, as the domestic jar between Zeus and Hera in the first book of the *Iliad* shows.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore the Homeric gods are neither omniscient nor omnipotent. "The gods know all things" is a pious tribute of the poet, but the narrative shows it to be untrue. In the thirteenth book of the *Iliad*, when Zeus is gazing off into Thrace he fails to notice that Poseidon enters the battle on the plain immediately below him.<sup>4</sup> In the fifth book of the *Odyssey* the tables are turned in a sense, for Poseidon finds that during his absence among the Ethiopians the Olympians have taken action favorable to Odysseus, whose return the god of the sea would fain prevent.<sup>5</sup> For nine years Thetis and Eury-

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 5, 335 ff.; 855 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 21, 400-426.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 1, 531-570.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 13, 1 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Od.* 5, 1-298.

nome alone among the gods knew where Hephaestus was concealed: when he had been thrown from heaven by his mother in shame for his lameness, they hid him in a grotto where the sound of the stream of Oceanus drowned the noise of his smithy.<sup>1</sup> Apollo arrives too late to save Rhesus from his fate;<sup>2</sup> and we are told that in the previous generation Ares was imprisoned by the giants Otus and Ephialtes in a bronze jar, like an Oriental jinn, for thirteen months. There he had perished if it had not been for the friendly aid of Hermes who stole him from his prison.<sup>3</sup> The gods at times thwart one another's purposes, and, as we have seen, they may even be wounded or frightened like human beings.<sup>4</sup> In such ways as these do the Homeric divinities show their limitations.

Not only can the gods thwart one another, but they are all at times subject to Fate or Destiny, which, although vaguely conceived by the poet, is none the less inexorable. It seems usually to be an impersonal power, although sometimes it is identified with the will of an indefinite god (*δαίμονος αἴσα*) or with that of Zeus himself (*Διὸς αἴσα*). It was fated that Sarpedon, the son of Zeus, should die, and Zeus in spite of his grief yielded him up to his doom, not because he could not have opposed Fate successfully, but because he feared that other divinities would wish to save their children if he saved his.<sup>5</sup> Yet in the *Odyssey* Athena disguised as Mentor declares to Telemachus that not even the gods

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 18, 394-405.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 5, 385-391.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 16, 433 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 10, 515 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Il.* 23, 382 ff.; *Il.* 5, 335; 855 ff.

can save a man they love whenever the fatal doom of death lays hold on him.<sup>1</sup> So naturally inconsistent is the poet, for in his day men had not reached the stage where they could form any adequate notion of unity in the world. Fate therefore is not conceived to be an inexorable power which is constantly operative, as we find it represented at a later time among the Greeks and among the Romans, notably in Vergil.

At times we find a more or less fatalistic view of life, Fate being conceived as a destiny fixed at birth, for the notion that the thread of life was spun already existed. So Hecuba, wailing for her son, cries that mighty Fate spun Hector's doom at the hour she gave him birth;<sup>2</sup> and Alcinous declares that under Phaeacian escort Odysseus shall reach his home, but that there he will suffer all that Fate and the cruel spinsters spun for him when his mother bore him.<sup>3</sup> This fatalism is most clearly expressed in passages such as that where Odysseus on Circe's isle cheers his companions by reminding them that they shall not enter the house of Hades until their fated day shall come,<sup>4</sup> and especially in those lines in which Hector comforts his wife Andromache who would have restrained his impetuous desire for battle:<sup>5</sup> "My good wife, grieve not overmuch for me in thy heart, for no man shall send me to Hades contrary to my fate; and I say that none, be he a coward or brave, has ever escaped his doom, when once it comes." Still the Homeric bard had not arrived at any consistent view of

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* 3, 236 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* 7, 196 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 6, 486 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 24, 209 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* 10, 174 ff.



destiny; he gave utterance to that feeling which men had vaguely then as now, that beyond all lies something fixed and invariable to which all things and beings are ultimately subject.

As we have seen, the divinities may work at cross purposes: there is nothing in the Homeric poems like monotheism or pantheism in any true sense. When the Homeric man said that a thing happened "with god's help," he was simply recognizing the agency of the gods in everything. Not knowing the special divinity concerned, he left him nameless; least of all had he any concept of a complete divine polity. There is, therefore, no such thing in the epics as a divine providence in the way of a definite purpose or plan such as we shall later find in the fifth century. Like mortals the Homeric gods discuss their plans, without being able to see the end from the beginning; they are moved by caprice, so that Zeus changes sides twice on the second day of the great battle between the Achaeans and Trojans.<sup>1</sup> The vacillating and capricious character of the gods is not offset by the protection that a divinity may give a favorite, such as Athena gave to Odysseus in his long wanderings and on his return to Ithaca. Throughout both poems we find the assumption constantly held that every blessing comes from the gods, that they give every distinction. In like fashion men believed that all misfortunes were due to divine anger or hostility. So Odysseus was kept from home for nearly ten years by Poseidon's hate; the favor of Athena toward the Achaeans turned to

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 8.



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wrath because of the violence done her shrine in the sack of Troy so that she caused an evil return for her former favorites. Indeed in misfortune the Homeric hero's first question was as to what god he had offended. The problem of evil therefore was a simple one — all depended on the will or whim of some divinity.

But there are other things which we should note with regard to these divinities. As has been said, they are universalized, not attached to definite localities; in fact the epics contain few traces of that localization which was the rule in the common religion of Greece. Although Hera declares:<sup>1</sup> "Verily three cities there are most dear to me, Argos and Sparta and broad-streeted Mycenae," she is in no sense regarded as bound to these localities. In Demodocus' song of the love of Ares and Aphrodite it is said that when released from the bonds in which Hephaestus had ensnared them, the god of war fled to Thrace and laughter-loving Aphrodite to Paphos in Cyprus,<sup>2</sup> but these places are not their homes in any strict sense. And so with the other gods. The Olympians are rather free, universal divinities, unhampered by local attachments. Olympus itself is in the upper heaven more than in Thessaly. It is of course true that lesser divinities, like river-gods and mountain-nymphs, are localized, but these beings have little influence on the affairs of men.

Let us now consider briefly the most important Homeric gods. At the head of the divine order stands Zeus, "father of gods and of men" (*πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε*

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 4, 51 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* 8, 360-366.

θεῶν τε), "most exalted of rulers" (ὑπάτε κρείοντων), "most glorious and most mighty" (κύδιστε μέγιστε), as he is called.<sup>1</sup> To him the elements are subject and at his nod great Olympus trembles. He is the guardian of oaths, the protector of the stranger and the suppliant. Famed for his prowess and might he never in person enters battle, but indirectly he takes a hand in the strife between the Greeks and the Trojans. Although he surpasses all in wisdom and power, at times he is outwitted by other divinities. Like a mortal chieftain he presides at council on Olympus in his great hall, whither he may on occasion summon the divinities of every class to attend a general assembly.<sup>2</sup> Olympus indeed is conceived as loosely organized after the fashion of an aristocratic state with Zeus as chief (βασιλεύς), the Olympians as members of the council (βουλή), and the whole body of minor divinities as making up the assembly (ἀγορή).

Hera, the queen of Olympus, is at once both sister and wife of Zeus; they are the only wedded pair on Olympus. She belongs, however, distinctly to the second class of Olympians. She takes no part in the Odyssey; and in the Iliad, although she favors the Achaeans most vehemently, she is less active than Athena. In character she is a good deal of a scold, so that Zeus fears her jealous anger.<sup>3</sup> He knows that she is accustomed to block his plans, although on one occasion he had punished her by stringing her up by the wrists and tying anvils to her feet! Of this he indignantly reminds her:

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 1, 544; *Od.* 1, 45; *Il.* 3, 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 20, 1 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 1, 517 ff.

"Dost thou not remember when I strung thee up aloft and from thy feet I hung two anvils, and round thy wrists I bound a golden bond unbreakable? And thou wast hung in the upper air and the clouds. Wroth were the gods throughout high Olympus, but still they could not approach and free thee."<sup>1</sup> Again he had beaten her, and when Hephaestus tried to intervene, Zeus seized the meddler by the foot and threw him out of Olympus. Hephaestus himself recalls the experience: "All the day long I fell and at setting of the sun I dropped in Lemnos, and there was little life left in me."<sup>2</sup>

Athena is above all the goddess of war, and she plays a large part in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In the latter poem she is the special guardian of Odysseus, whose ready mind wins her admiration. She is also the most skilled of all divinities, the patroness of every handicraft.<sup>3</sup> She is perhaps the chief divinity of Troy; on the Trojan citadel stands her temple to which the noble matrons bring a gift of a beautiful robe with the promise of generous sacrifice if the goddess will give them her protection against Diomedes.<sup>4</sup> She also has a home on the acropolis at Athens.<sup>5</sup>

Apollo, the archer god, is a patron of war and of bowmen. In the *Iliad* he is a violent enemy of the Achaeans and gives most effective aid to the Trojans; but in the *Odyssey* he plays no active part. He also inspires seers and prophets; and he is the god of the lyre

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 15, 18-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 1, 592 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* 13, 296-299; 331 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 6, 297-310.

<sup>5</sup> *Il.* 2, 549; *Od.* 7, 81.

and the teacher of bards. In prayers he is named with Zeus and Athena when an object is most earnestly desired.<sup>1</sup>

These three are the greatest of the Homeric divinities, although there is no close connection among them. Apollo's virgin sister, Artemis, plays a part much inferior to that of her brother, but in many ways she is similar to him. Her arrows bring a quick and peaceful end to women as Apollo's do to men. In the chase she is preëminent: she is the fair goddess of wood and mountain.

Ares and Aphrodite also belong to a lower rank. In function they are limited to an appeal to a single passion each, Ares to rage for slaughter, Aphrodite to the passion of love. They are both treated with a certain contempt and are mocked by the other gods.

Hephaestus is the god of fire, the lame craftsman of Olympus. It was he who built the homes of the gods; but his skill was especially shown in the wondrous works he wrought in gold and silver. Such were the mixing-bowl which Phaëdimus, the Sidonian king, gave to Menelaus;<sup>2</sup> wonderful automata, twenty golden tripods, which on occasion would go of their own accord to the assemblage of the gods and then return;<sup>3</sup> or the gold and silver dogs which guarded the palace of Alcinous.<sup>4</sup> Still more marvellous were the golden maidens endowed with reason, speech, and cunning knowledge, which supported their maker as he limped from his forge to his

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 2, 371 and often.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 18, 369 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* 4, 615 ff.; 15, 115 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* 7, 91 ff.

chair;<sup>1</sup> and above all was the splendid armor wrought for Achilles.<sup>2</sup>

Poseidon, the brother of Zeus, has as his special province the sea; but he appears on Olympus at the councils of the gods. In the *Iliad* he supports the Achaeans vigorously; no doubt from anger at the Trojans whose king Laomedon had once cheated him of the pay which was his due for building the walls of Troy;<sup>3</sup> in the *Odyssey*, angry at the blinding of his son, Polyphemus, he holds Odysseus far from Ithaca, until at last the Phaeacians bring him home. Then in wrath he turns their vessel into stone.<sup>4</sup>

Such in brief are the eight great gods of the Homeric poems. Of these Zeus is easily the first, but in the first rank also are Athena and Apollo; Hera and Poseidon hold a second place; and Hephaestus, Ares, and Aphrodite belong to the third class. Many other divinities there are, but all of lesser rank, like Hermes whose duties are those of a higher servant or messenger. He is sent to escort King Priam to the tent of Achilles to ransom Hector's body,<sup>5</sup> and he is despatched to Calypso's isle to bid her let Odysseus go.<sup>6</sup> There are some indications that he is already the patron of thieves, as he is of servants. Dionysus and Demeter, so prominent in later Greece, have not yet won a place in the Olympic circle. There is no hint in the epics of the mysteries and the orgiastic cults which were afterwards of great signifi-

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 18, 417 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 18, 478 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 21, 442 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* 13, 162 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Il.* 24, 334 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Od.* 5, 28 ff.



cance. Hades, the brother of Zeus and Poseidon, holds as his realm the dark abode of the dead, where he reigns with Persephone as queen. His murky kingdom is now represented as beneath the earth, again as far out on the bounds of Oceanus. But Hades takes no active part in either poem.

Besides these there is a host of divinities, some named but most unnamed, who cause all the phenomena of the visible world. In fact the Homeric man could not conceive of a natural world obeying laws whose operation was fixed; on the contrary, he could only think of animated beings as the causes of all events. For him every occurrence was the manifestation of the will of some divinity; the natural and the miraculous were one.

It is evident from this hasty review of the Homeric gods that we have in the epics no complete and fully organized pantheon. Zeus is regarded as supreme but he is thwarted and outwitted by lesser members of the Olympic circle, even as they block one another. In fact Homer's view of the gods abounds in contradictions of which however only the scholar and the critic have ever been very conscious. From our modern standpoint we notice the moral inconsistencies above all. Although Zeus is the guardian of justice, he is deceitful and treacherous if occasion arises, as when at the request of Thetis he sends a delusive dream to Agamemnon to urge him to give battle, in spite of the fact that he cannot be successful.<sup>1</sup> It is Zeus also who is responsible for the faithless breaking of the truce between the Achaeans

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 2, 5 ff.

and Trojans<sup>1</sup>; and many other instances might be cited to illustrate his utter untrustworthiness. On his lack of domestic morality I need hardly dwell.

Yet we must remind ourselves that to the Homeric Age there was little connection, if any, between morals and religion. Religion is concerned with man's relation to the gods, morality with his relation to his fellow men. Morality is therefore developed through the social relations first of all, and only later is brought into relation to religion. In Homer the sense of social obligations is much more keenly realized than is that of religious sanctions. The cardinal virtues are bravery, wisdom, love of home and family, and regard for hospitality. In a life of action, filled with war, bravery is of prime importance; by it wealth, power, and honor are won. Proper to such a life are practical wisdom and even cunning. The highest praise is to be called "first in council and first in battle."<sup>2</sup> Agamemnon is lauded by Helen as "both a good king and a mighty warrior."<sup>3</sup> The standing epithets of Odysseus, "very crafty" (*πολύμητις*) and "the man of many devices" (*πολυμήχανος*), show the qualities which were deemed praiseworthy. Yet Odysseus had won this distinction by his skill in lying and deceiving — practices still deemed highly laudable in our own world if employed against a foe, or sometimes even when used as acts of caution. Yet if our modern views do not wholly coincide with the ancient on these points, we can feel only admiration for the regard for home and family,

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 4, 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 1, 258; cf. 2, 202, 273.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 3, 179.

the unselfish generosity, and the universal hospitality toward strangers which the epic heroes display.

The poems also set a high value on personal honor. The outrage done Menelaus by Paris, who violated the most sacred laws of hospitality by carrying away his host's wife, was the whole cause of the Trojan War. To avenge this outrage all the princes of the Achaeans rallied as if the wrong suffered had been their own. Agamemnon's high-handed act in taking the captive Briseis from Achilles roused that wrath which is the first word of the *Iliad*. The *Odyssey* is the epic of a personal will which, triumphing over all disasters, finally wreaked a terrible vengeance on the insolent suitors who had wooed Odysseus' wife, devoured his substance, plotted against his son, and at the end shamefully insulted Odysseus himself. The punishment of the suitors is the victory of justice over lawlessness and possesses a moral significance which was not lost on antiquity.

In what I have just been saying I have already implied that man's relation to the gods was not ethical but ritualistic. We must remember that when we speak of "sin" or a "consciousness of guilt," we are presupposing a self-conscious and self-searching individual. This the Homeric man was not; on the contrary he was in the highest degree natural, unreflective, and unconscious of self. In fact the Homeric concept of sin touches our moral ideas at hardly more than three points. Disregard for an oath, failure to honor one's father and mother, and disrespect for the stranger and suppliant were high offenses against heaven and brought down

divine wrath on the transgressor. But in general sin is failure to recognize man's absolute dependence on the immortals, to give them due honor, to pay them proper sacrifice, and to walk humbly on the earth. Sacrifice is tribute whereby man acquires merit with divinity; of such meritorious credit the priest Chryses reminds Apollo in his prayer at the beginning of the *Iliad*:<sup>1</sup> "Hear me, Lord of the silver bow, . . . if ever I have roofed over a temple pleasing to thee, or if ever I have burnt in thy honor fat thighs of bulls or of goats, then accomplish this my prayer." Agamemnon in the stress of battle reproaches Zeus for bringing his present disaster upon him in spite of the fact that he made sacrifice on every altar as he hurried to Ilion;<sup>2</sup> and many other illustrations might be cited. Failure to make due offering might bring serious disaster. Menelaus, on his way home from Troy, omitted sacrifice before leaving Egypt; so he was forced to return from the island of Pharos and repair his failure, after which he accomplished his voyage easily.<sup>3</sup> When Oeneus neglected Artemis, she sent the Calydonian boar to afflict his land: "Artemis of the golden throne sent a plague upon them, angry that Oeneus did not offer her the first fruits of his harvest. All the other gods had their feast of hecatombs, and only to the daughter of mighty Zeus did he fail to make offering, whether he forgot or gave no thought to the matter. But he showed great folly in his soul."<sup>4</sup> Again the plague sent by Apollo on the Achaean host before Troy

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 1, 37-41.<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 8, 236 ff.<sup>3</sup> *Od.* 4, 351 ff.<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 9, 533 ff.



suggests to Achilles that the god may be angered at a failure to perform some vow or to offer a hecatomb.<sup>1</sup> It is little wonder that the enlightened Plato felt horror and disgust at such notions as these and that he condemned this kind of worship as an "art of trafficking" (*ἐμπορικὴ τέχνη*).<sup>2</sup> Still this Homeric idea of the relations between men and gods — an idea which has not wholly disappeared from the world today — rests on the notion that gods and men belong to one common society in which the obligations are binding on both sides.

Especially to be avoided was insolent pride; man must not boast himself overmuch; there were fixed bounds set for him which he might not transgress. So Ajax met his fate because of his insolent defiance: "Even so he had escaped his doom, hateful though he was to Athena, if he had not let fall an insolent speech and committed great folly. He said that in spite of the gods he had escaped the great gulf of the sea; but Poseidon heard his loud boasting. Straightway then he took his trident in his mighty hands and struck the Gyraean rock and cleft it in twain. Part remained in its place, but a portion fell in the deep, that part on which Ajax first sat and uttered his great folly; but it now bore him down beneath the vast billowy sea."<sup>3</sup> But Achilles showed the approved attitude of mind when he thus addressed the dead Hector: "Lie now dead; but my doom I will accept whenever it please Zeus and the other immortal gods to send it."<sup>4</sup> This fear of punishment from heaven,

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 1, 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Euth.* 14 E; *Alc.* 11, 149 D ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* 4, 502 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 22, 365 f.

## 24 RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF THE GREEKS

of that which Aeschylus and Herodotus call "the envy of the gods," long operated to keep in check excess of speech and added no doubt to the comfort of Greek society. Of magic whereby man can compel the gods there is nothing in Homer; the inferiority of mortals to the immortals is complete.

We may now properly consider the Homeric view of life after death. The epic psychology made no sharp distinction between the soul and the body; on the whole the body was identified with the self rather than the soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ), which goes to the realm of Hades when the man is dead. There in the world of shadows beneath the earth or far out by the stream of Oceanus the shades, pale images of the men who were, exist; they do not live. The pathetic plaints of the shades that come up to Odysseus in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* show how hopeless is their lot. Though Orion pursue the wild beasts over the cheerless plains of asphodel and Minos hold his golden staff and sit in judgment over the dead, yet all is insubstantial and far less than life. The often quoted words of the shade of Achilles sum up the whole matter: "Speak not to me of death, glorious Odysseus. For so I might be on earth, I would rather be the servant of another, of a poor man who had little substance, than to be lord over all the dead."<sup>1</sup>

There is no system of future punishment or rewards, although a few individuals have won supreme suffering like Tityus, Sisyphus, and Tantalus or gained high station like Minos, the judge. Therefore beyond the grave

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* II, 488 ff.



there was for the Homeric man no hope, no satisfaction. Only here under the light of the sun and in the glory of action could the epic hero find his joy. This is, in no small measure, the cause of that pathos which strikes us occasionally in the poems. Man is spoken of as the most pitiful of creatures, the feeblest of all beings which the earth nourishes. Evil and suffering sent by the gods are his lot, unrelieved by any prospect of the future.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now summarize briefly the matter we have thus far been considering together. As I said at the beginning of this lecture, religion in the Homeric poems shows the influence of the conditions under which the poems were composed. Intended for Ionian princes of Asia Minor, emigrants who had lost the support which local attachment always gives, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* present those traits of religion which were everywhere understood and which made a universal appeal. Therefore the Homeric gods have a synthetic character; they are, as has been aptly said, "composite photographs" of local Zeus's, Apollos, Athenas, and so on. Again since the epics were intended for entertainment, the gods are represented not as remote, but human and real; they have characters and personalities which local divinities did not possess. In picturing them as more human, in rehearsing their quarrels, intrigues, passions, and even physical peculiarities, the poet not only amused his care-free audience, but brought the gods closer to men; he made them more comfortable creatures to live with, even if they were moved by whims and fancies. Their

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 17, 446 f.; 24, 525 f.

worship was sacrifice associated with the banquet which men and gods shared in common fellowship; the gods were thought to wish man's offerings and service just as man desired communion with them. Malevolent divinities, daemons of the earth, rites of riddance by which man seeks to avert the wrath of some spiteful or angry being, all the great mass of practices unquestionably common to the folk-religion of the age, were for the most part omitted by the poet as unsuited or uninteresting to his aristocratic audience. There is almost nothing bearing on the cult of the dead save possibly in connection with the funeral of Patroclus; incantation proper is mentioned only once; and Circe's potent herbs by which she transformed Odysseus's companions into beasts, like Circe herself, belong to fairyland. The Homeric religion, therefore, is largely a social religion of this world, of sunlight and of action.

Yet if Homer's gods are human, they are still impressive; they have the dignity which comes from unchanging age and superhuman power; they are conceived in the grand way. So true was this that as the Homeric poems became popular literature, studied in school and known to all men, they created a universal religion. They also influenced the types under which the Greek artists represented their great gods. Tradition says that when Phidias was asked by his associate Panaenus what type he had selected for his Zeus at Olympia, he replied with Homer's lines: "The son of Cronos spoke and nodded under his dark brows; and the ambrosial locks of the king fell down from his immortal head, and he

shook great Olympus.”<sup>1</sup> Such was the effect of this statue after it had stood for five centuries and a half that the orator Dio Chrysostom said of it: “Whoever among mankind is wholly weary in soul, whoever has experienced many misfortunes and sorrows in life, and may not find sweet sleep, he, methinks, if he stood before this statue, would forget all the calamities and griefs that come in the life of man.”<sup>2</sup>

We must, however, recognize that the spiritual contribution of the Homeric poems to later Greece was inevitably less than the artistic. No inspired bard was needed to teach the lessons of man's inferiority to the gods and of his dependence on them, although these are constantly emphasized; yet the epics also inculcate the necessity of moderation in act and speech; and they teach that Zeus is the guardian of oaths and of hospitality. Furthermore they express the half-realized belief that Zeus is the protector of all justice; and they bring home the fact that the individual must pay for his sin, however he may have been led into it. But the greatest contribution which the poems made to later religious thought was paradoxically due to the fact that they made their gods so thoroughly human, for it inevitably followed in due season that the gods were measured by the same standards of right and wrong that were applied to men. This eventually ennobled man's concept of divinity, so that he required of the gods a perfection to match their immortal nature.

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* i, 528 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Or.* 12, 51.

Herodotus names Homer and Hesiod together as the great theological teachers of Greece. But when we compare the later poet with the earlier we find a marked contrast between them. Homer looks backward to an earlier day; his poems reflect the glory of that splendid age when the Achæan princes, like Agamemnon in golden Mycenæ, ruled at home in power, or on the plains of Troy contended with divine and human foes. Homer is aristocratic, universal, objective, with little self-consciousness, hardly concerned with the origins of gods and men or with the possible goals toward which the world was moving. Hesiod was the son of a farmer, who according to tradition had come from Cyme in Asia Minor to Boeotian Ascra which lay on a spur of the range of Helicon near a shrine of the Muses. When Hesiod wrote, the land had felt the exhaustion of war, the coming of ruder tribes from the north and west had swamped the earlier civilization, and both noble and peasant were finding life harder. These conditions are reflected in the Hesiodic poetry: it deals with fact rather than fancy; for the splendid dramatic deeds of men and gods it substitutes homely adage, reasoned reflection, and moral tale. Hesiod is self-conscious and reflective. He uses the first person, whereas Homer never names himself. A dour son of the soil, born in gloomy days, he is the first writer of Europe to speak for the common man.

The two chief poems which bear the name of Hesiod are the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. The former deals with the origin of the world and the generations of



the gods. It is an attempt to bring order into current myths by sifting and arranging them into a system. The material Hesiod found ready to his hand; his task was to systematize and set it forth to his audience. The Theogony is the first extant work of European literature to present the idea that dynasties of the gods have succeeded each other in time, the rule of Uranus giving way to the sway of Cronos, who in his turn was displaced by Zeus. We have seen that Homer did not concern himself about such matters as these; that only vague references to such ideas are found in the Iliad and Odyssey. Hesiod, however, represents another age and another aspect of the Greek mind, a desire to bring harmony into the varied and inconsistent tales of current mythology and thus in a way to render the gods intelligible to men.

The gods of the Theogony are hardly moral beings; on the contrary much of the theology there presented is far ruder than that of the Iliad and Odyssey. Some of the tales are on the level of primitive mythology, such as the account of the way in which earth and heaven were separated and of the manner in which the earth was fertilized; others retain more offensive elements like that of Cronos devouring his children, or of Zeus swallowing his wife Metis when she was about to give birth to Athena, for it was fated that her child should be the equal of its father in wit and cunning. In general the poet gives no sign of being conscious that this work might have moral or religious significance. The word justice (*δίκη*), which is so frequent in the Works and

Days, occurs but twice in the Theogony. The wives of Zeus are in succession Wisdom (Μῆτις) and Right (Θέμις), but his constant attendants are Violence (Κράτος) and Force (Βίη). In neither case, however, is any moral conclusion drawn therefrom. The only beings to whom moral functions are assigned are the Fates, "Goddesses who visit transgressions of men and gods and never cease from their fearful wrath until they have inflicted dire punishment on the sinner."<sup>1</sup> Save for this passage and one in which the punishment of the gods for perjury is described, the Theogony is less ethical than even the Iliad and Odyssey, for they have regard for certain social sanctions. The work is nevertheless significant and requires notice here because it bears witness to the critical mind that set the myths in order, and because it shows that the age of Hesiod was a reflective one.

Hesiod's other poem, the Works and Days, is of high moral import. It owes its title to the fact that it gives directions for various kinds of occupations and that it also contains a kind of peasant's calendar. By bribing his judges the poet's brother Perses had deprived the poet of the inheritance which was properly his. To this unjust brother Hesiod addresses his poem, but he rises constantly from the particular case to general moral considerations; indeed the poet's ethical lessons gain in force because they start with a personal application.

Work, justice, right social relations, and piety toward the gods are the cardinal themes of the Works and Days.

<sup>1</sup> *Th.* 220 ff.



At the very opening of the poem Hesiod points out that there are two kinds of Strife or Rivalry on earth, the one good and praiseworthy, the other evil. Evil strife leads to war and to discord, but the good, implanted by Zeus in the very order of things, ever urges men on to work. Hesiod delights in emphasizing the value of toil; he has given enduring expression to the natural dignity of labor in the verse,

"Ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος, ἀεργίη δέ τ' ὄνειδος .

Work is no disgrace, but laziness is a disgrace.<sup>1</sup>

By constant toil alone, he says, can the many misfortunes of life be relieved; by it riches and honor are won; and the worker is beloved by the gods. The lazy man on the contrary has hunger for his portion and is detested by gods and men: "Gods and mortals are alike indignant with the man who lives without toiling; he is like in energy to the stingless drones, for they without toiling waste and devour the product of the honey-bees' work. But do thou (Perses), love all seemly toil that thy barns may be filled with food in the proper seasons."<sup>2</sup> For the poor man the poet, and apparently his contemporaries, had little compassion, since he regards poverty as proof of a lack of industry, of a failure to work unceasingly with a determined spirit, which he holds to be the only way in which man can acquire the comforts which give dignity to life. In his mind shame is the natural lot of the poor, but self-respect the proper possession of the successful worker. And toil has for him

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 311.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 303 ff.

a divine sanction; it is a moral duty imposed on men by the gods. By it alone men attain not only material prosperity but virtue as well. "I perceive the good and will tell it thee, Perses, very foolish though thou art. Wickedness men attain easily and in great numbers, for level is the road to her and she dwells very near; but before Virtue the immortal gods have set the sweat of toil. Long and steep is the path to her and rough at the outset; but when one has reached the summit, thereafter it is easy, hard though it was before."<sup>1</sup>

Smarting under the injustice done him by his unjust brother and the venal judges, Hesiod naturally praised justice (*δικη*) in his work. He repeats the word again and again. In the name of outraged universal justice he protests against the particular wrong he has suffered, but in his handling of this theme he passes far beyond the matter between him and his brother, and treats justice in a universal and impressive manner. He thus exhorts Perses: "Perses, harken to justice, and make not insolence prosper. For insolence is baneful even to the humble; nor can the noble easily bear the burden of it, but he sinketh beneath its weight, meeting doom. Yet the road that leadeth in the opposite direction, toward justice, is better to travel. Justice prevaieth over insolence in the end; even the fool knoweth from experience."<sup>2</sup> He presses home the truth that wrong harms the doer no less than him who suffers the wrong: "The man who worketh evil to another, worketh evil to himself, and evil counsel is most evil for him who counselled

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 286 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 213 ff.

it.”<sup>1</sup> Again he teaches that even if retribution is slow in coming, Zeus accomplishes it in the end: “Finally Zeus imposes due requital for the wicked man’s unjust deeds.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand Hesiod in a famous passage pictures with satisfaction the prosperity of the just: “But for those who render straight judgments to both strangers and citizens and never depart from justice, their city flourishes and their people prosper in it. Peace, which nurtures youth, dwells in the land and never does far-seeing Zeus bring fearful war upon the inhabitants. Never does famine or woe attend men who do justice, but in good cheer do they perform their due tasks. For them the earth yields abundant food, the oak on the mountains bears them acorns in its topmost branches, and its trunk is the honey-bees’ home; fleecy sheep are heavy with wool, wives bear children who are like their parents. The just flourish in prosperity continually; nor do they go away on ships, for the fruitful earth gives them its product.”<sup>3</sup>

The last sentence shows that trading in ships was less highly regarded than agriculture. The reason is to be found not alone in the comparatively undeveloped state of commerce, but also in the very nature of such commerce as the poet saw it, for he admits commerce into his plan rather unwillingly. He knows that the sea is treacherous and often wrecks ships and causes ruin; he holds that only men’s inordinate desires and folly tempt them to venture across the waters and to stake all on the chances of loss and death. More than this, he feels

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 265 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 333 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 225 ff.

a moral defect in transmarine trading, even when profitable, for one may gain wealth by a single venture. Such is not his ideal; rather he would see material prosperity won by the long toil and the frugality which make agriculture successful.

But to return to justice. Hesiod, as we have already seen, makes this the whole basis of man's relation to his fellows; on just actions and labor depends all prosperity; injustice injures the doer no less than the object of the wrong, and in the end is sure of punishment. Indeed according to the poet justice is what distinguishes man from the lower animals: "Perses, put these words now in thy heart, and harken to justice, but forget violence utterly. For this the son of Cronos has established as a rule for men. Fishes and wild beasts and winged birds he ordained should devour one another, since there is no justice among them; but to man he has given justice, which is by far the best."<sup>1</sup> The theme of justice in human relations is developed into injunctions to be kind to the stranger, the suppliant, and the orphan, to respect parents, to regard another's bed, and to give hospitality to one's friends. Yet it must be said that Hesiod's social morality is strictly utilitarian, not altruistic; indeed there is something in his poem which reminds us of the maxim "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," as when he writes: "If thy friend is the first to do thee an unkindness either in word or deed, remember to return him twofold; but if he would bring thee again into friendship and consent to render thee justice, accept it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 274 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 709 ff.



But we must remember that this was the almost universal teaching among the Greeks down to the end of the fifth century.

Justice, however, is more than a social virtue between men; it is the chief attribute of Zeus, personified as his daughter and constant attendant: "Justice is the daughter of Zeus, glorified and honored by the gods who hold Olympus; and whenever anyone does her wrong with perverse blame, straightway she sits by Zeus, son of Cronos, and she tells him the thoughts of unjust men, that the people may pay for the folly of the princes who by their wrongful purposes and crooked speeches turn judgments from the right course."<sup>1</sup> In his work of defending justice Zeus is aided not only by his daughter, but by a host of watchful guardians, intermediaries who report mortals' deeds: "Thrice ten thousand are the immortal servants of Zeus upon the rich earth, who watch mortal men. Clad in mist they fare to and fro on the earth watching deeds of justice and wrongful acts."<sup>2</sup> Justice then never fails to bring sooner or later the due return to right and to wrong actions; from her and the watchful messengers of Zeus there is no escape. The Homeric man had recognized that righteousness is better than evil and that the wicked are constantly threatened by punishment; but Hesiod in his *Works and Days* goes somewhat further than Homer, in that he makes justice a necessary attribute of the gods as well as of men.

Man's dependence on the gods is naturally recognized in Hesiod as elsewhere by the obligations of sacrifice,

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 256 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 252 ff.



libation, and prayer, for these are universal modes of religious expression. The poet betrays the unimaginative character of a peasant by the baldness with which he says that material prosperity is the whole purpose of religious observance as well as of justice: "According to thy ability offer sacrifice to the immortal gods with thy person pure and undefiled, and burn the goodly thigh-pieces; again propitiate them with libations and with sacrifices, both when thou liest down and when the sacred light comes, that they may have a heart and mind kindly disposed toward thee; that thus thou mayest buy the land of others and not another thine."<sup>1</sup> Yet we must remember that this huckster's mind, as Plato might have called it, was common enough in Greece, that it was the ordinary attitude of the official Roman religion throughout Rome's history, and that it has not disappeared from men's thought today.

In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* evil, like the good, comes from the gods. The simple fact is unquestionably recognized. But Hesiod searches more deeply for the origin of evil which he pessimistically regards as omnipresent. The story of Prometheus and Pandora contains in part the poet's answer to this eternal riddle. The myth was already ancient and familiar to all. Once men lived without effort and free from evils, but when led by crafty Prometheus they had endeavored to cheat Zeus of the better part of the sacrificed bullock, the god withheld fire from them. Yet the cunning Titan stole a spark of this divine fire and delivered it to mortals. This

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 336 ff.

Zeus allowed men to keep; by its aid they created all industries, but only at the cost of constant toil and struggle. Prometheus he punished harshly. To work his vengeance on mortals he caused Hephaestus to create a woman on whom the gods bestowed all gifts so that she was named Pandora. She opened a jar containing every kind of evil, which straightway flew out among mankind. Only *Ἑλπίς* remained therein—a word hardly equivalent to our Hope, but rather meaning “anticipation of misfortune.” It then is the only plague to which man is not subjected.<sup>1</sup> He is obliged to suffer, having been involved in the original sin of Prometheus, who wished to cheat Zeus of the sacrifice due him. Such is the sacred tale offered as an explanation of the presence of evils on earth. To us it seems childish, and indeed it did not completely satisfy Hesiod.

He also gave a second explanation of a very different sort, one which was in reality a profound attempt to trace man's origin as well as to explain his actual condition.<sup>2</sup> This is the story of the five ages of man, beginning with the age of gold in which gods and men dwelt together. Then mortals lived like the gods with hearts untroubled, far from toil and suffering, and the earth yielded them of its own accord abundant food. Over them Cronos reigned. But the men of this Utopian age died in painless sleep; and the silver age under Zeus followed. Compared with the former it was an age of degeneracy in which men showed insolence toward one another and failed to sacrifice to the gods. Zeus in his

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 47-104.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 109-201.

anger destroyed these mortals. The three remaining ages — the bronze, the heroic, and the iron, show both decay and advance. The men of the bronze age were fierce, wild creatures, unapproachable in their savagery. To these succeeded a better and juster race, that of the heroes, who however met their fate in war beneath seven-gated Thebes or at Troy for fair-haired Helen's sake. And now they dwell care-free in the Islands of the Blest. Finally Hesiod pictures his own age, that of iron. Now no longer do men spend their effort in war and battle, but they have come to a selfish individualism, "when father and children will not agree together, nor guest with host, nor friend with friend, nor brother longer be dear as aforetime."<sup>1</sup> But this unlimited egoism, which Hesiod pictures, presupposes an intellectual evolution beyond the stage where men fought in masses as in the heroic time. Thus faithfully and relentlessly he describes his own day. Yet the poet is not without confidence that there are good as well as evil elements in the age of iron; but on the whole he is despondent and exclaims: "Would that I were not living in the fifth age of men, but that I had either died before them or been born later."<sup>2</sup>

Thus Hesiod takes ancient myths and by his genius makes them epitomize the stages of man's evolution downward morally, but forward intellectually. The faint hope expressed at the end of the exclamation just quoted shows that the poet saw the possibility of a better age to come, and therein he showed himself a

<sup>1</sup> *W. and D.* 182 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 174 f.

prophet. He apparently did not regard the present age of iron as eternal, but perhaps, in accordance with the cyclical theory of the world, thought that the ages might revolve and the Golden Age return again. Furthermore, although he regards man's course as largely one of degeneration, he sees that it has also been one in which intellectual progress has been made and law developed.

When we come to the question of life beyond the grave we must acknowledge that herein Hesiod shows no advance over Homer. For ordinary mortals oblivion in the dank halls of Hades seems to be the relentless doom. Only a few, the heroes of that earlier age are allowed by divine favor to dwell with hearts free from trouble in the Islands of the Blest.

Yet if we consider the Hesiodic poetry as a whole it does bear witness to a great change from the world of Homer. It shows clearly that by the seventh century B.C. man was coming to self-consciousness, that he was endeavoring by reflection to solve some of the deepest problems of life, and that he had already developed a moral code that demanded righteousness in the individual. Hesiod depicts for us a more thoughtful and a more reflective time than that shown us by Homer. How significant this change was I shall try to show in my next lecture.

## II

### ORPHISM, PYTHAGOREANISM, AND THE MYSTERIES

THE seventh and sixth centuries before Christ were marked by important social, philosophic, and religious movements. Of the many causes which brought about these changes, the most easily traced are those of a political and economic nature.

The form of government that is pictured in the Homeric poems is one in which the king and nobles alone have an effective voice. The humbler folk meet to hear the decision of the few, which they are expected to accept without a murmur. On only one occasion does a common man, Thersites, venture to raise his voice against his betters, and then he is made the laughing-stock of his fellows and is beaten into a sad silence by Odysseus. But the Homeric organization of society was gradually superseded by aristocracies in which the power of wealth ultimately claimed a position beside nobility of birth. The development of industry and trade in Ionia and on the mainland of Greece proper created a new wealthy class which was a rival of the old nobility whose riches had been in herds and lands. The political struggles which accompanied these changes were highly educative to considerable bodies of citizens, who were expending their efforts in improving the condition of their own class or of themselves rather than in main-



taining the advantage of some prince or noble. In this way there was developed a political and social self-consciousness.

When kings were superseded by aristocracies, magistracies, limited in scope and duration, had necessarily been employed. Thus political machinery and organization developed. These political changes and the failure of ancient customs to fit new social and economic conditions naturally led to a demand for written law, which alone can be the basis of even justice and protection. So we hear of many "law-givers" in Greece during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., of whom the most famous were Zaleucus among the western Locrians, Charondas of Catane, and Draco of Athens, followed about thirty years later by Solon. Now written law usually tends to become ultimately the embodiment of rules for all, not simply for one class alone, so that the written codes marked a long step in the advance of the common man toward equality with the noble. It is true that the aristocracies in many parts of Greece were later followed by the rule of tyrants, but the tyrannies themselves fostered the development of the lower classes on whose well-being and support the existence of the tyrannies depended.

Of the law-givers I have just mentioned one belonged to Catane, a Greek city in Sicily. This fact suggests another important movement which demands our notice. I mean the planting of colonies. The great era of Hellenic colonization fell between the eighth and sixth centuries, and was in a sense but a continuation of that

earlier wave of expansion which had carried the Greeks to Cyprus and to the nearer shores of Asia Minor. Among the causes which led to the establishment of colonies the chief seem to have been defects in the land system, whereby many were deprived of a share in their ancestral estates, political conditions often oppressive, and trade, which was now coming largely into the hands of Greeks because of the disasters which were inflicted on their former rivals, the Phoenicians, by their eastern neighbors. From Megara and Miletus, from Chalcis and Eretria, began an outpouring of eager traders, of the landless, the needy, the discontented, and the adventurous, who eventually planted colonies entirely around the Mediterranean and Euxine Seas. Between these colonies and the mother cities a rich stream of traffic flowed; the growth of trade stimulated manufactures and increased wealth. In the colonies there existed from the beginning greater equality than in the older communities, the land system was more equitable, and many men of humble birth came to wealth and power. Furthermore, with travel and success in new communities there was an expansion of mind, a sense of power acquired by prosperity, such as can always be observed under similar conditions. These developments had their reflex influence on the society of the mother cities, and both at home and in the colonies there came to pass those political and social changes to which I have referred above. But the most important result of these things for our present consideration was the fact that by these developments large numbers of men were

awakened to self-consciousness, and that the first period of individualism in Greece was begun.

Whenever individuals come to self-consciousness, and have the leisure and security which were enjoyed in many Greek cities of this time as the result of improved social and economic conditions, men find not only the opportunity but also the occasion for reflection. This was the case in our period. Men began to think and question about themselves and the world around them, to reflect not only concerning the political and social world in which they lived, to ask what their place in it was, but also to inquire still deeper into the meaning of things. They debated with themselves questions relating to the gods, the nature and justice of their rule; and most significant for our present interest they began to ask whence men came and whither they were going. One great monument of this period is Hesiod's "Works and Days," of which I spoke in my last lecture. It is also important to remember that the seventh and sixth centuries were the age of the so-called Seven Wise Men, to whom were assigned many moral precepts which became revered proverbs in Greece. These sayings, no less than the works of Hesiod and the Gnostic Poets, bear witness to an age of increasing reflection.

In the seventh century Ionia controlled the trade between Asia and Europe. Its chief center was Miletus. Here in the first half of the sixth century before our era began Greek philosophy, with Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes as the leaders. The modest task which they set themselves was nothing less than the solution

of the universe. Their philosophic views are of no special interest to us now; but it is a fact of supreme importance that here for the first time in Greece appeared men whose reflection had made them bold enough to wrestle with the whole problem of nature including man, and to propose solutions entirely at variance with the traditional views. This philosophic development was one result of the factors that we have been considering — factors which produced also new ethical and religious movements that do concern us directly.

With the emergence of Greece in the seventh century from the dark ages that followed the Mycenaean civilization, we find that certain beliefs, expressed or only hinted at in the Homeric poems, come to the surface, and that religious ideas imported from without make themselves manifest. The cult of the dead for example is almost passed over in silence by the Homeric poems. At the funeral pyre of Patroclus Achilles offered jars of oil and honey, and slew horses, dogs, and twelve Trojan youths<sup>1</sup>; but nowhere else is such a sacrifice mentioned in the *Iliad*. Likewise in the *Odyssey* the only instance of any similar offering is in the description of Odysseus' visit to the borders of the realm of Hades to consult the shade of the seer Teiresias, where it is said that he dug a square pit, poured out a triple libation, and then after prayer and vows let the blood of a ram and a black ewe flow into it to attract the shades.<sup>2</sup> Yet we know from archeological and other evidence that the worship of the dead was common in Greece from the Minoan

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 23, 170-176.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* 11, 24-36.



and Mycenaean times throughout antiquity. Ceremonial purification also, of which there are but few instances in Homer — and none of these is magical — now appears common, as a notion of impurity attaches to many conditions and acts which require expiation. The change in sentiment with regard to murder will serve as an illustration. In the Homeric poems killing brought no pollution either to the murderer or to his land; but in the Cyclic epics, which date from the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., bloodguilt required expiation just as in the later tragedies. So in the *Aethiopis* Achilles went to Lesbos to be cleansed from the stain of having slain Thersites. In fostering and directing rites of purification the oracle of Apollo at Delphi played an important part. There was developing, indeed there had been developing from an unknown period, a sense of defilement and of the necessity of cleansing. At this point, however, I must again speak a word of caution. We need to remember that morality develops slowly. It is undoubtedly a far cry from the morality of the seventh century to Plato's definition of the impure man as the one whose soul is base, or to that motto which in a later century was written over the entrance of the shrine of Aesculapius at Epidaurus, "Piety consisteth in holy thoughts." We must bear in mind that to the man of the seventh and sixth century sin and purification were primarily if not wholly ceremonial matters, and that his concept of future happiness was largely material. But the consequence of his feeling was great in future centuries.



Other phenomena of the seventh and sixth centuries require our notice at this point. We saw in the preceding lecture that the gaze of the Homeric man was fixed on this world with its victories and its defeats, that he viewed splendid action on the field and wise counsel in the assembly of the princes as the individual's highest province and his supreme happiness. The world beyond this had no rewards comparable with those of this life; the greatest boon man could hope from the future was that his exploits here might become the subject of song for coming generations. Suffering he regarded as necessary that a higher purpose might be attained. "The will of Zeus was accomplished" was the explanation beyond which man might not go; he must find his comfort in such unity as that thought gave to the world. Hence arises that pathos and sadness which strike us again and again in Homer. But the new age sought relief by shifting its gaze from this world to the next and by expecting there the recompenses and balances which make life just and complete; for it the future life furnished an escape from the sufferings of this present existence. Moreover under the manifold influences which I have tried to sketch above, men began to be impressed with the unity which apparently underlay the variety of the phenomenal world. This is the problem of philosophy. It is true that the early Greek philosophers devoted themselves chiefly to the material world, of which they regarded man as a part; but in religion there resulted a tendency to pantheism, which saw behind the multitude of divinities one all-embracing

god. Moreover there were not lacking thinkers to struggle with the question as to the way in which man could bring himself into accord with the unity of the world. So in spite of the individualism of this age we find it also an age of mysticism — which may be the very opposite of individualism. The mystic tends to hold in greater or less degree the belief that by destroying that which sets off the individual from his fellows, that is, by uprooting personality through the destruction of the passions, or by some ecstatic state which takes one out of himself, man may attain to union with god and therefore to salvation. This belief may lead even to a religion without gods, or it may be bound to a belief in divinity. In Greece these tendencies were not fully developed for a considerable time, but we can see that in the seventh and sixth centuries the longing for future happiness, the desire for salvation, and the mystic means thereto were already potent elements in Greek thought. They showed themselves in various ways; one outlet for the religious longing was found in the religion of Dionysus, especially as it was incorporated in the beliefs of the Orphic sect.

Dionysus came late into Greek religion. As we have seen, in Homer he was not a member of the Olympic circle. Mythology has preserved many stories which bear witness to the opposition which his worship received as it spread over Greece. The newcomer, like Ares and the Muses, was a Thracian. His worship was introduced by immigrants and spread gradually to the south. Apparently the cult of the god was brought into Greece by more than one wave of immigration, and by

more than one route. Thebes and Orchomenos in Boeotia were early centers of his worship, from which Delphi was later influenced. In the Peloponnesus probably Argolis received the new comer first. Even before the god was established in southern Greece he may have been carried to Crete directly from his northern home. The islands of the Aegean, the cities of Asia Minor, and ultimately the remote colonies knew the divinity. In Attica tradition said that his first home was in the country demes, notably at Icaria, where Americans excavated his shrine some thirty-five years ago. Probably the early rulers at Athens received the god into the city, but it was the Pisistratidae who especially favored his worship and gave him a home on the south side of the Acropolis, where the fifth century saw presented all the glories of the Attic stage.

The new god came as the god of all living things, of plants, trees, the lower animals, as well as of man. In short he was a nature divinity whose death was seen in the dead vegetation of winter and whose rebirth appeared with the revival of spring. His orgiastic rites no doubt were originally, in part at least, intended to recall the dead god to life. But in all such religions there is the tendency to see in the rebirth of the dead god the warrant of man's future life. The hope is easily awakened that as the vegetation, whose life disappears in the ground, is revived in the spring, so man, whose body also is laid in the earth, may be recalled to new life. The Dionysiac myth set forth the story of the god's death and rebirth. It was natural then that men should

feel that if they could secure union with the god, lose themselves in the divine, they too might attain immortality. Herodotus tells us that among the Thracian peoples the Getae believed that men at death went to dwell with their chief divinity beneath the earth.<sup>1</sup> Such hope of immortality Dionysus brought with him from his Thracian home.

The worship of this god was wholly unlike that of the Olympian gods. Under his influence his devotees, mostly women, in divine madness left their homes and daily tasks to roam the wild mountainside, clad no longer in their ordinary dress but wearing the skins of wild beasts, their flowing hair bound with ivy and wild bryony. In their excitement they were unconscious of time and place, unfettered by the normal limitations of human powers and sensibilities. Wild music stimulated their orgiastic dance; in frenzy they tore living creatures limb from limb, and devoured the raw dripping flesh, calling meantime on the god by name. This mad revel was continued until the participants fell exhausted to the ground.

We can well understand how these things shocked the earliest Hellenic spectators and why it was that in becoming a Greek god, Dionysus lost much of his wilder Thracian nature and the more savage elements of his cult. To this amelioration the Delphic oracle doubtless contributed. Yet it is certain that the ecstatic rites were known on Mt. Cithaeron and on the heights of Parnassos down to a late date. Elsewhere for the most

<sup>1</sup> Herod. 4, 94 ff.



part the excesses of the cult were checked and ordered by law. The Greeks had come to see that there was something more than extravagant madness in the wild Dionysiac revel. The possessed devotee was set free for the moment from the tangled net of daily life, gained for a brief time new and superhuman powers, a very foretaste of immortality. Not least of all he was made one with all nature that united to worship the one god. Now this escape from the daily round of human affairs, this desire for union with divinity, has constantly made its appearance in various times and under varied conditions; as we all know, it has led to extraordinary religious outbursts in both pagan and Christian ages.

Dionysus came also as god of wine. In the revival and elevation of the man, which the moderate use of wine gives, the Greek saw a divine mystery. Of course this use of wine is exactly parallel to the use of hashish and other narcotics for religious ends, and the ecstasy produced by music and the dance is familiar in the history of religion as a means to put individuals or whole companies into direct communication with the spirits or into union with a god.

Now it will readily be seen that this idea that the soul can be separated from the body and united with the god implies two things: first, a belief in a difference between soul and body which sets them off against each other, and secondly, a belief in the divine nature of the human soul. The former clearly established for the first time in Greek thought the concept of the dual ego, the double self, the significance of which we can hardly overesti-



mate. We shall be concerned with it throughout the entire course of our considerations. The second made it easy for men to explain the source and destiny of the soul and to point out the means by which the soul must be set free to seek its natural destiny. The possibility that the soul, escaping from the body during the Dionysiac frenzy, might unite itself with god, might indeed become a god, so that the orgiastic devotee was given the divine name *βάκχος* — this showed the way by which man could secure immortality. He must loose his divine soul from the body that it might ultimately enjoy its divine life unhampered by earthly bonds and be forever with god.

According to the Dionysiac myth, which naturally varies much in details, the god was pursued by the Titans, the warring powers opposed to Zeus; in his distress Dionysus changed himself into various forms, finally into that of a bull which was torn to pieces and devoured by the Titans. But Athena saved the heart and gave it to Zeus who swallowed it. Hence sprang the new Dionysus. The Titans were ultimately destroyed by the thunderbolt of Zeus and their ashes scattered to the winds. You will at once notice the parallelism between this myth of Dionysus and those of Osiris, Attis, and Adonis. These are all gods who die and live again, and so become gods of life and death, divinities through whom man gains assurance of his own immortality. You will also notice in this myth of Dionysus how most ancient and crudest elements are united with a rather advanced attempt to wrestle with the problems of the

world, and particularly with the problem of evil. Over against the beneficent divinity, or divinities, are set the Titans, powers of ill.

The myth became the basis of the spiritual belief and of the mystic ceremonial, and was made the center of that movement which we call Orphism. Who the founder, Orpheus, was, we cannot say. The ancients knew him as a Thracian, a magical musician, and also as a priest of Dionysus. In the popular tradition the musician overshadowed the priest. Yet he was regarded as the founder of the Bacchic or Dionysiac rites. The truth we can never know; but thus much is certain, that in the sixth century, possibly because of a second wave of Dionysiac religion, a movement appeared in which the religion of Dionysus was spiritualized and ennobled, and in which consecration, ceremonial holiness in this life, became the chief concern as the means of securing that immortality which would follow. The movement, however, which may have been stimulated by a feeling of dissatisfaction with the traditional religion, was only one prominent manifestation of the general mysticism which showed itself in many forms during the sixth century. Pythagoreanism was closely allied to it. Indeed some think Orphism only a collective name for the mysticism of the time.

Our information as to the beginning and earliest forms of Orphism is scanty and mostly late. But considering the influence which Orphic ideas had in the fifth century, for example on Pindar, Empedocles, and Plato, not to speak of the latter Neoplatonists, we are justified in

regarding the sect as of great significance. And we have a warrant for attributing to the sixth century doctrines which are consistently set forth by our witnesses, especially by Empedocles and Plato, so that with due caution we may use also the fragmentary Orphic literature with some confidence.

We do not know where Orphism started. In Greece proper, Delphi, Thebes, and Athens were prominent centers; in greater Greece, Croton in southern Italy, Camarina and Syracuse in Sicily. Some would regard southern Italy, and specifically the city of Croton, as the home of the movement; possibly they are correct, for a late tradition told of three Orphics at the court of Pisistratus. They were Zopyrus of Heraclea, Orpheus of Croton, and Onomacritus, who formed part of the commission which is said to have arranged the Homeric poems at the orders of the Athenian tyrant. However little truth there may be in the tradition, it is striking that two of the three came from southern Italy; and the name of one of the commission, Orpheus, marks him as a devotee. Yet Athens became the literary center, if I may use the term, for the diffusion of Orphism.

The Orphic religion was distinguished from the popular religions by having a body of belief and a method of life. Undoubtedly the beliefs of the sect were enlarged and modified from age to age; but the Orphics had a unity which is remotely comparable to that of Christian churches. Of the organization of the brotherhoods we know little, but probably they were loosely bound together in a manner similar to those of the religious asso-

ciations known to us from later times. Nor can we tell whether the Orphics were numerous. Probably they were not; but in any case their mysteries and teachings were important and influential; they introduced new ideas which were destined to produce profound changes in Greek religious thought.

With the varied details of the grotesque Orphic theogonies we are not now concerned. They were similar to those of Hesiod and others in their main lines, but they owe their importance for us now to the fact that they exhibit a pantheism which is opposed to the common polytheistic theology of the time; they endeavor to show that deity is one and universal under whatever form or appearance. To this universal divinity they give the name now of Zeus, now of Dionysus, the greatest of the children of Zeus; at times he is called also Zagreus. Certain Orphic verses clearly express this pantheistic thought: "One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus, one god in all."<sup>1</sup> And again: "Zeus was the first, Zeus of the flashing lightning bolt the last; Zeus the head, Zeus the middle; from Zeus have all things been made. Zeus was the foundation of the earth and of the starry heaven; Zeus was male, Zeus was the bride immortal; Zeus the breath of all things, Zeus the rush of the flame unwearied; Zeus the source of the sea, Zeus the sun and the moon; Zeus the king, Zeus of the flashing lightning the beginning of all things. For he concealed all and again brought them forth from his sacred heart to the glad light, working wondrous things."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Frsg.* 7 A.

<sup>2</sup> *Frsg.* 46 A.



You will remember that in the myth of the rending of Dionysus by the Titans, these powers of evil were burned to ashes by the thunderbolt of Zeus. According to one version of the story man is formed from these ashes, which contain the element of the divine, taken in by the Titans when they devoured the god. Thus man is of a two-fold nature, his soul divine, Dionysiac, his body evil, Titanic. On an Orphic tablet found in a grave in southern Italy the soul declares: "I am a child of earth and the starry heaven, but my race is from heaven. This ye know yourselves." Here we have a complete expression of man's duality: his body is of the earth, but his soul is of celestial origin. The descent of the soul was due to sin; wind-borne — as Empedocles says of himself, "an exile from god and a wanderer,"<sup>1</sup> it entered into the body, in which prison it was condemned to live until such time as it might be delivered. Clement of Alexandria, quoting the Pythagorean Philolaus of the fifth century B.C., reports: "The ancient theologians and seers bear witness that for a punishment the soul is yoked with the body and buried in it as in a tomb."<sup>2</sup> This figure of the body as the prison-house or the tomb of the soul was used by Plato, as we shall have occasion to see in a later lecture.

Man's hope, therefore, according to the Orphic, lies in deliverance from his body, the Titan element of his nature, that the Dionysiac part, his soul, may be free and untrammelled. Yet one might not of his own motion cast off his body by a physical act, for a round is prescribed by necessity.

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 14.



After death the soul was fated to pass to Hades and then from its sojourn there into another body, and so on. This doom was the result of sin. To hasten the process and escape from evil, "to end the cycle and have respite from sin," a course of life was necessary, which was defined by the Orphic teaching. The requirements of the Orphic life seem to us trivial and absurd for the most part. Apparently abstinence from flesh was required, except perhaps at certain sacramental festivals; this prohibition was of course due to the doctrine of metempsychosis. No bloody sacrifices were allowed for the same reason. The use of eggs and beans was forbidden, for these articles were associated with the worship of the dead; and burial in woolen garments was likewise wrong. Besides these taboos certain rites existed of which we get only hints. There were liturgies, initiations, magic incantations which seem to show that in time at least an elaborate ritual was developed. All these things were the means by which the soul might be purified from its sin which condemned it to the prison of the body, and which pursued it through incarnation after incarnation.

After death, as I have said, the soul awaited in Hades its rebirth, but its stay in Hades, like its life on earth, was a period of reward or punishment: "They who are righteous beneath the rays of the sun, when they die have a gentler lot in a fair meadow by deep-flowing Acheron. . . . But they who have worked wrong and insolence beneath the rays of the sun are led down below Cocytus's watery plain into chill Tartarus."<sup>1</sup> So

<sup>1</sup> *Frsg.* 154 A.

this stay in Hades was a period of punishment and of purification, as life itself was a period of penance. The duration of this intermediate stay in Hades was conceived perhaps as a thousand years. In any case, after due season the soul entered upon a new incarnation, which apparently was determined by the innocence or guilt of its former life. Rebirth was not always into human form, as the Orphic verses show: "Wherefore the changing soul of man, in the cycles of time, passes into various creatures: sometimes it enters a horse, . . . again it is a sheep, then a bird dread to see; again it has the form of a dog with heavy voice, or as a chill snake creeps along the ground."<sup>1</sup> The poet-philosopher Empedocles declared that before his present existence he had been "a youth, a maiden, a bush, a bird, and a fish of the sea."<sup>2</sup> So the soul was buffeted from birth to death and back to birth again. Of those who had been guilty of most grievous sins Empedocles says: "There is an oracle of Necessity, an ancient, eternal decree of the gods sealed with strong oaths: when one in sin stains his hands with murder, or when another joining in strife swears falsely, they become the spirits who have long life as their portion, who are doomed to wander thrice ten thousand seasons far from the blessed, being born in the course of time into all forms of mortal creatures, shifting along life's hard paths. For the might of the air drives them to the sea and the sea spews them on the ground, and the land bares them to the rays of the bright sun, and the sun throws them in whirls of ether.

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 223 A. '

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 117.

One receives them from another, but all hate them. Of this number am even I now, an exile from god and a wanderer, for I put my trust in mad strife.”<sup>1</sup> The number of reincarnations was not fixed so far as we know, though apparently ten thousand years was thought to be the limit of the process for the ordinary soul. Probably it was believed that there was no end of rebirths for the wicked, but that they were condemned to their repeated fate forever; or that they were doomed to endless punishment without rebirths.

But you may ask, what was the ultimate fate of the purified soul? To this, too, we can give no complete answer. Apparently the soul, stripped at last of all that was earthly and defiling, was then thought to be first truly free and alive. On Orphic tablets of the fourth century before our era found in southern Italy we read these words of the triumphant soul: “I have escaped from the sorrowful, weary round, I have entered with eager feet the ring desired. I have passed to the bosom of the mistress queen of the lower world.” And it is greeted in answer: “O happy and blessed one, thou shalt be god instead of mortal.”<sup>2</sup> Apparently the purified soul left earth and Hades behind. There is no hint of absorption into god; no idea of Nirvana. The spirit of Greek thought required that the individuality of the soul should be retained. No doubt the Orphics conceived of every kind of heaven that was possible, many of them of most materialistic nature. Indeed, Plato reproaches some of them for believing future happiness to be a perpetual drunken round.

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Or.* 18.

For the sinful, torments of a most fearful sort were reserved: not only did they lie in mud and filth, but they were exposed to most terrible creatures who rent their vitals. In short, the Orphic hell was not less awful physically than that of the medieval and later Christian, which in no small part was inherited from the Orphics.

Before we go on to consider other movements of the sixth century, let us summarize briefly the contributions of the Orphics to Greek religious thought. In the first place they definitely shifted man's look from this world to the world beyond. In Homer, as we have seen, this world offered all for which man could hope; but to the Orphic, as to the devoted sectaries of all redemptive religions, this world was unimportant compared with the next in which he was to realize his fondest desires. Again the Orphics emphasized the duality of man, regarding him as a divine soul imprisoned in a sinful body. They made the divinity of the soul a motive for the religious life, the aim of which was to free the spirit of man from the sin which visits him in the prison-house of the flesh. Thereby they started the tendency to religious asceticism which was to be sharply emphasized by Christianity when a thousand years had past. Their doctrine of the divine nature of the soul they also made the basis of their belief in the soul's immortality; for if the soul is divine, it must be eternally so. Furthermore, so far as we can know, they introduced the idea of pre-natal sin for which the individual soul must pay the penalty. It needs no argument to show the intrinsic



importance of these ideas; as we go on, we shall have occasion to observe their significance in Greek religious thought.

Less valuable in itself, but not less persistent, as we can still see in our own Christian church, was the notion that only the initiates, who by purificatory rites had been received into the sacred association, could hope for salvation. Union with the divine nature and future blessedness were thus made to depend on sacraments rather than on virtue. Indeed, we need not suppose that here any more than in the mysteries at Eleusis there was originally any requirement of a virtuous life. But reason and an awakened ethical sense among the Greeks began early to demand of the initiates compliance with the recognized standards of morality, as the passages already quoted show; and there can be no doubt that in due time most of the various mysteries contributed to the ethical life. Yet the inevitable tendency in the opposite direction made itself felt and there were many Orphic charlatans and quacks who promised salvation to all who would undergo the cheap rites of their initiations.

We must now glance at a contemporaneous and related movement — I mean Pythagoreanism, which will have sprung into the thoughts of many of you already.

Whether Orphism learned from Pythagoras or Pythagoras from Orphism cannot be determined; but it seems probable that Croton was already an Orphic center when about 530 B.C. Pythagoras of Samos after long



travels established there an association which combined in a way hitherto unknown religious and philosophic aims. Pythagoras may have attached himself to some group of Orphics already in existence and have inspired it with his political and philosophic interests. In any case his society, which was opposed to the democratic temper of Croton, became in time important enough to be regarded with suspicion and forced to move to Metapontum; ultimately the members were dispersed carrying their doctrines with them throughout the Greek world.

Our knowledge of the philosophic ideas of Pythagoras himself amounts to little. It is clear that in contrast to the emotional Orphics he was interested in intellectual pursuits, especially in mathematics; more than that we cannot say; our present concern lies rather in the ethical and religious views and practices of the society which he established. This set high store on ethical discipline, following a strict course of life, for the ultimate aim was identical with that of the Orphics — salvation and release from sin. Like them the Pythagoreans also held to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Their rules enjoined simplicity of food, rare use of meat, and abstention from the eating of beans and eggs. But more important was the discipline which was prescribed for the mind and soul. The applicant for admission to the brotherhood was first tested to determine his fitness. The neophyte was bound to silence and obedience. "The master said it" was argument enough for him. The members devoted themselves to reflection, to self-

examination, to the pursuit of the truth. Their highest aim was "to follow god." Although the Pythagoreans fixed their gaze more on this world than the Orphics did, they also were of great religious significance. They emphasized the duality of man, the moral obligation of the individual, and especially the possibility of training and purifying the soul, and so helped to establish a spiritual heritage for later centuries.

Now I shall invite your attention to a third manifestation of the mystic tendency of this age. Fourteen miles northwest of Athens, between a fertile plain and the sea, lies the ancient town of Eleusis, the center of the most important mysteries in Greece. The story of Demeter is familiar to us all — the goddess whose daughter, Persephone or Kore, was carried off by the god of the lower world. According to the Homeric hymn to Demeter, the mother wandered fasting in search of her daughter over the earth. She came to Eleusis in the guise of an old woman, where she was found by the daughters of the king, Keleos, who took her to their home. There she was kindly received, and was installed as nurse to the infant son of the king. Under her care the child prospered and grew marvellously, for quite secretly Demeter anointed him with ambrosia, breathed upon him, and cherished him in her bosom. By night she hid him "like a brand in the fire . . . , for she would have made him free from age and death forever."

But the queen saw her and cried out in dismay. The goddess was angry, yet none the less promised glory im-

perishable; she declared herself: "I am the honored Demeter, who am the greatest good and joy to immortals and mortals alike. Come, let all the people build me a mighty temple and hard by it an altar beneath your town and its steep wall, above Callichoros on the jutting spur. But the rites I will myself prescribe, that here ever after you may duly perform them and appease my will." So the temple and altar to the goddess were built, but she still mourned for her lost daughter. In her sorrow she held back the seedgrain in the ground and all man's plowing was vain, so that the race of men had nearly perished from the earth if it had not been for Zeus, who interposed and finally restored Persephone to her mother — but not forever. Before she left the house of the dead, Pluto had made her eat a pomegranate seed by which she was bound to return beneath the earth. So she spent two-thirds of each year with her mother on the earth, coming "when the ground blossomed with fragrant flowers," but returning to the lord of the dead when the flowers faded and the grass withered before the coming of winter. Zeus then summoned Demeter to join the immortal gods on Olympus; but before she went, "she quickly sent up the grain from the fertile ground, and all the broad earth was heavy with leaves and with flowers. And the goddess went and taught the kings who deal out justice, Triptolemus and Diocles the charioteer, mighty Eumolpus, and Kelleos, leader of the people. To them she showed the manner of her rites and to them all her mysteries, holy, which none may transgress or enquire into or make

known. For a great curse of the gods restrains men's speech. Happy is he whoever of men dwelling on this earth has seen these things! But he who is uninitiate in these holy rites, who has no share in them, never hath equal lot in death in the shadowy gloom." So says the Homeric hymn to Demeter, which was composed, according to the general opinion of scholars, in the seventh century before our era.

Thus we see that before this hymn was written the myth was fully developed at Eleusis. There Demeter, Kore, and Pluto had their place, and with them were associated certain heroic personages. A temple and altar to the two goddesses already existed, and mysteries were celebrated which gave to those who might see them and share in them the warrant of a better lot in death than that for which the uninitiate might hope. The date at which the mysteries were established cannot be determined. This is no place for the speculations of the learned in detail, but they seem to have existed as early as the eighth century, and indeed they probably go back to a much remoter antiquity; yet there is no mention of them in Homer or Hesiod. In their earliest form they evidently consisted of certain religious ceremonies connected with agriculture by which the dead grain was called to life in the spring. The grain and the earth from which it sprang were worshipped as the corn-mother, Demeter, and then by a development natural in such religions the goddess was doubled and Kore, the maiden, came into existence beside Demeter. In the cult of these goddesses various rites had developed — fasting, purifi-



cations, and night vigils; a myth grew up to explain the ritual and the relation of the two goddesses, with whom a god of the dead was early associated; so something like the story in the Homeric hymn came into being. The agricultural festival was gradually transformed into one of profound meaning, by partaking in which one gained an assurance of future happiness. The wonderful miracle of reviving vegetation, of the grain which dies in the ground and springs anew to life, has often served as the warrant of man's longing for a revival of his own life, as an assurance of his hope of immortality. So gods and goddesses of agriculture or of vegetation, which grows and dies and grows again, have become for men the lords of life and death, as we have already seen in the case of Dionysus.

The English word mystery is somewhat misleading in such a connection. A mystery in the Greek sense is a secret ritual to which only those may be admitted who have first been prepared by some rites of purification or probation. Such, for example, is the Christian Eucharist to which the Greek word *μυστήριον* was freely applied. After the proper ritual of initiation, through which the neophyte is guided by one previously initiate and expert, he may take part in the secret performances, which are thought to confer some special power or to bring him into close and privileged relation to divinity.

Originally the festival at Eleusis belonged to a noble Eleusinian family, or probably to two families. In the seventh century Eleusis was incorporated with Attica; an Eleusinion, a branch of the shrine at Eleusis, was



built in Athens; and the privilege of sharing in the festival was apparently given to all Athenians. The mysteries were especially fostered in the sixth century by the tyrant Pisistratus, who built a new hall of initiation which was destroyed by the Persians, but later was reconstructed on a larger scale. Under Pisistratus the mysteries may have been opened to the whole Hellenic world. In the fifth century the broad formula of admission was: "Whoever has pure hands and speaks our tongue." Eleusis shared in the glory of Athens' greatest period, and even in the time of Athenian weakness and decay the mysteries retained much of their ancient prestige. Many Romans, including some of the imperial house, were initiated, and the popularity of Eleusis continued as late as the third and fourth centuries. Julian the Apostate in his youth was here initiated. In 364 A.D. the Emperor Valentinian I forbade all nocturnal festivals, including that at Eleusis, but when the pro-consul of Achaea declared that the people could not live without the mysteries, he relaxed his prohibition so far as they were concerned. Thirty-two years later Alaric destroyed the sanctuary, and its long history, which began before history, seemed closed. Yet Eleusis was true to Demeter, for in spite of the iconoclastic tendencies of the Greek Church, the inhabitants continued to worship as St. Demetra a mutilated ancient statue supposed to be that of the goddess, until in 1801 the Englishmen Clarke and Cripps carried it off to its present resting-place in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.

The mysteries were under the general charge of the

King Archon and his assistants at Athens, but the officials proper continued to be drawn from the two sacred families of the Eumolpidae and Ceryces. From the former was selected the highest official, the hierophant, who held office for life. He alone had the right to show or to explain the secret objects and ceremonies. The next three priests were taken from the Ceryces, and like the hierophant were chosen for life; they were the torch-bearer, dadouchos, who carried the sacred torch at sacrifices and purifications, the altar-priest, and the sacred herald, hieroceryx. Besides these four high officials we know of a considerable number of lesser priests and priestesses, heralds, and secular officers who do not concern us now.

The would-be initiate applied to someone belonging to either of the sacred Eleusinian families to act as mystagogue and lead him through the preliminary purification, which seems to have been essentially identical with that employed to purify any unclean person; this done, the mystagogue duly presented the novice to the officials and recommended him as a proper person to be initiated. There were two degrees of the secret rites: in the first the novices were initiated and became mystae; in the second they advanced to be epoptae, those to whom were made special revelations not vouchsafed to the mystae.

Each year there were two celebrations of the mysteries, one at Agrae, a suburb of Athens, in the month Anthesterion, which corresponds roughly to our February-March, and the greater celebration at Eleusis in Boëdromion, our September. The initiate was ordinarily obliged to take part in the lesser celebration before he

could be admitted at Eleusis. The great festival lasted eight or nine days, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second or twenty-third of the month Boëdromion. On the first day the participants assembled before the Painted Porch in Athens to listen to the formal proclamation, in which the officials ordered all unclean persons and all foreigners to withdraw, and enjoined secrecy on all who were to share in the festival. The sixteenth was a day of purification when the participants washed in the sea; the seventeenth and eighteenth were spent as holidays at Athens, during which various sacrifices were made; so that it was not until the nineteenth that the festal procession started for Eleusis, carrying the image of Iacchos, a form of the infant Dionysus. Although the Sacred Way is less than fourteen miles in length, so many stops were made at shrines that Eleusis was not reached until evening. The ceremonies there continued three days and nights. There were sacrifices and offerings to many divinities. In memory of Demeter's hunt for her daughter the devotees roamed the shore by night carrying lighted torches; and finally like the goddess, they broke their fast by drinking a holy potion of meal and water. The consummation of the festival was the celebration in the Great Hall, where some three thousand might find place on the seats which rose in banks on all four sides. There were two sorts of representations — one for the *mystae*, who were witnessing the festival for the first time, and the other for those who were more expert, the *epoptae*. What went on in the Hall we do not know; we can, however, con-

jecture in general the nature of the celebrations. They consisted of "things done," *δρῶμενα*, and "things said," *λεγόμενα*. The former may well refer to some kind of mystery play, or of tableaux, in which incidents from the myth were represented, such for example as the rape and the recovery of Kore, the mourning of Demeter, the birth of the child Iacchos, and so forth. In fact Clement of Alexandria tells us: "Deo and Kore became persons in a mystic drama, and Eleusis with its torch-bearer celebrates the wandering, the abduction, and the sorrow."<sup>1</sup> From this and other notices we may conclude that some simple mystery play was acted or tableaux vivants presented before the eyes of the company. In any case there was nothing elaborate. Sacred objects were doubtless exhibited, and apparently handled by some of the spectators. The formula: "I fasted, I drank the potion, I took it from the chest and having tasted I put it away in the basket and from the basket into the chest"<sup>2</sup> gives a hint of certain sacraments, but we cannot now clearly determine their nature. There was no preaching or exhortation. At most the "things said" were a simple ritual, or explanation of the objects exhibited. There may have been music and singing. On the last day of the festival two jars were filled with water and set up, one to the east and the other to the west of the great hall. Then these were overturned with the words, *ὕε κύε*, "rain," "conceive."<sup>3</sup> Here we have a

<sup>1</sup> Clem. *Protrep.* p. 12 P.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18 P.

<sup>3</sup> Ath. XI, 93, p. 496: Proclus ad Plat. *Tim.* p. 293 C. It is not certain that the notices in Athenaeus and in Proclus refer to the same rite, but I have ventured so to interpret them.



bit of ancient agricultural ritual, of magic, intended to secure abundant rains and the prosperity of the crops. A similar rite was the solemn exhibition of an ear of grain as a symbol of the initiates' hope.<sup>1</sup>

We inevitably inquire as to what the nature of the teaching of these mysteries was. As a matter of fact, there was probably little if any instruction given. Life beyond the grave was certainly taken for granted. The mystic ritual consisted of only certain simple symbolical ceremonies and representations which each initiate might interpret according to his own impressions. The spectators were put into a certain frame of mind; the celebration touched their emotions and not their intellects. So Aristotle says: "The initiates are not to learn anything, but they are to be affected and put into a certain frame of mind."<sup>2</sup> This we can understand from the effect of a Christian Mass, which, full of the richest meaning to the devout Catholic, to another may seem of no significance.

Although we have no reason to believe that there was formal teaching at Eleusis, we have abundant evidence of the convictions of the initiates. They clearly enjoyed peace of mind and happiness, and they believed that in the future life their blessedness would be secure, and that they could dance in the sacred dance, while the uninitiate would be wretched. As the Homeric hymn to Demeter promised: "Blessed is he among mortal men who has seen these rites."<sup>3</sup> And Pindar, at the begin-

<sup>1</sup> Hippol. *Philos.* p. 115 M.

<sup>3</sup> 480 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 45 Rose.



ning of the fifth century, declared: "Happy he who has seen these things, and then goes beneath the earth. For he knows the end of life and its Zeus-given beginning."<sup>1</sup> Sophocles too says: "Thrice blessed are they who have seen these rites and then go to the house of Hades, for they alone have life there; but all others have only woe."<sup>2</sup> In the *Frogs* of Aristophanes the chorus of mystae sing: "For we alone have a sun and a holy light, we who have been initiated and who live toward friends and strangers with reverence towards the gods."<sup>3</sup> And finally I would offer you the evidence of an inscription set up in the third century of our era by an Eleusinian hierophant: "Verily glorious is that mystery vouchsafed by the blessed gods, for death is no ill for mortals, but rather a good."<sup>4</sup>

There were branches of the Eleusinian mysteries established in the Peloponnesus, of which that at Andania in Messenia is best known to us through a long inscription happily preserved.<sup>5</sup> But it never rivalled Eleusis. Of the other mysteries dating from an early period, those of Samothrace were most important and influential, being second only to the Eleusinian. Herodotus tells us that the Samothracians got these mysteries from the Pelasgians; among modern scholars it has been the fashion to regard the two male divinities there worshipped, the Kabeiroi, as Phoenician in origin; but whatever the source from which they sprang, in the period in which they are known to us neither the gods

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 753.

<sup>3</sup> 454 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Eph. Arch.* III (1883), p. 81, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ditt. Syll.*<sup>2</sup>, 653. The date of the inscription is between 94 and 91 B.C.

nor the mysteries betray foreign elements. With the Kabeiroi were associated Demeter and Kore, and in general the mysteries seem to have resembled those of Eleusis. As elsewhere the initiates were of two grades, *mystae* and *epoptae*; there were "things done" and "things said," and the assurance of safety here and hereafter was equally potent. Branches were established, notably in Thebes, as early as the middle of the sixth century B.C.

You will observe that the mysteries did not interfere in any sense with a faith in the many gods of popular belief or with their worship. We should also note that here no less than in Orphism ecclesiastical exclusiveness was evident: only those who had been initiated and had partaken of the sacraments could hope for salvation. Yet by the end of the fifth century the Eleusinian Mysteries had gained a moral significance, as is shown by the passage from the *Frogs* of Aristophanes quoted just now. A few years later Andocides in his speech *On the Mysteries* appealed to his jurors, reminding them that the purpose of their initiation was that they might punish the impious and save those who had done no wrong.<sup>1</sup> Still there was undoubtedly abundant warrant for the sarcastic joke of Diogenes who asked: "Shall the robber Pataecion have a better lot after death than Epaminondas, just because he has been initiated?"<sup>2</sup>

We have now considered three manifestations of the mysticism which became prominent in the sixth century before our era — Orphism, Pythagoreanism, and the

<sup>1</sup> *De mys.* 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Plut. de aud. poet.* 21 F.

Greater Mysteries. We have seen how a new religious sense arose which turned men's thoughts toward the next world and future happiness. This happiness the Orphics and Pythagoreans endeavored to secure by a prescribed mode of life, by ceremonial purifications, and by sacraments. The Mysteries likewise offered assurance through initiation and participation in their sacred ritual. In every case the devotees were inspired with confident hope, not by reason, but by ceremonies and emotional experiences. Philosophy was not yet united with religion.

### III

#### RELIGION IN THE POETS OF THE SIXTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES B.C.

IN the preceding lecture we considered together various manifestations of the mystic tendencies which developed in Greece during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Now we must turn back and ask what evidence we have from the poets of these centuries as to the course of morality and religion. To the epic poetry of Homer and the didactic verse of Hesiod succeeded the elegiac, iambic, and melic poets. The individualism of the age, the spirit of reflection, political changes, personal ambitions and passions are all mirrored in their verses. When we summon them as witnesses to their day, we must remember that the evidence they can offer is only incidental and frequently partial; that it reflects the temper of the audience as well as the views of the poet. In this fact, indeed, lies our chief warrant for consulting them, for while poets may be leaders in thought far in advance of their time, a contemporary hearing is secured by them only when their hearers sympathize with the ideas which they express. Again it must be borne in mind that we have for the most part only fragments of the poetry of this time, preserved by quotations, and that we therefore cannot form adequate judgments of the whole.

When, however, we examine the scanty remains that we possess, we find that on the whole there is little evidence of progress in morality and religion beyond Homer and Hesiod. The concepts of the gods are essentially the Homeric, except that Zeus plays a larger part in the divine economy than in Homer. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as we have seen, he is often thwarted and outwitted by the other gods, some of whom seem at times almost on an equality with him. But in the poets of the seventh and sixth centuries the will of Zeus is unquestionably supreme. No god hopes to oppose him successfully; all the rest play minor rôles. Indeed, it is not too much to say that we have here a developed sense of unity in the world, although the poets of this time did not by any means reach the position of the philosophers or attain to any real pantheism. Yet an advance is made: not only is Zeus supreme, but Zeus and Fate are now more closely identified, so that there is no conflict between them, such as we noticed in the Homeric poems.

Of all the poetry that has been preserved to us from the sixth century the elegiac verses which have been handed down under the name of Theognis show most reflection. The poet himself was an aristocrat of Megara, who about the middle of the century was driven into exile by the violent struggles between the aristocratic and the democratic parties. Much of the verse which we have is addressed to a youth, Cyrnus, and is of a didactic or gnomic character. The poet undertakes to teach his young friend conduct in life, so that the verses consist largely of rules for living adapted to



various situations and of a universal nature. Although it is probably true that much of what passes under the name of Theognis was not written by him, on the whole the tenor of the verses is such that we may use them with a good deal of confidence to illustrate the thought and the spirit of his age. Xenophon in commenting on this poet but slightly exaggerated the truth when he said that he was concerned with nothing else but virtue and wickedness, and that his poetry is a treatise on man, just as if a horse-fancier should write a treatise on horses.<sup>1</sup>

Theognis, like Homer, teaches that it is from the gods that all things come, both good and evil. He declares that no mortal man can be either wealthy or poor, base or good, apart from divinity. He bids his young friend pray to the gods, for they have all power and without them are no blessings or misfortunes to men.<sup>2</sup> A similar view is expressed by Simonides who insists that no one, neither state nor mortal man, has ever attained to virtue without the gods;<sup>3</sup> likewise by Archilochus, who in verses, imitated by Horace centuries later, exhorts his hearer to trust fully to the gods, and reminds him that oftentimes the gods set upright men who as a result of misfortune are prostrate on the black earth, and oftentimes they overthrow those who are very prosperous.<sup>4</sup> And again he declares that from Zeus come all things to mortals, and that no one should be surprised at any marvel which Zeus brings to pass.<sup>5</sup> In fact, from Homer

<sup>1</sup> Xen. ap. Stob., *Flor.* 88, 14.

<sup>2</sup> 165 f.; 171 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Frg.* 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Frg.* 56.

<sup>5</sup> *Frg.* 74, 5 ff.

on, the poets regard Zeus and the other gods as the source of all things, both good and evil. It is only later that the doctrine of man's complete responsibility for his sin largely supplants this earlier view.

It was natural that Theognis and his contemporaries should regard the lot of man with a pessimism exceeding that of Homer. As they looked about them they saw evil everywhere, the good afflicted, the wicked prosperous. They were oppressed by the weakness of humanity, so that their verses with regard to man and his lot are gloomy indeed — so much so that in one passage Theognis declares that in reality no mortal man on whom the sun shines is truly happy. Again he holds that man can have no foresight into the future, for it is hardest of all, he says, to learn the end of a thing as yet unaccomplished, to know how god will bring that to pass; a mist is stretched before men's eyes, and there is no way for mortals to test and try the outcome of the future.<sup>1</sup> The poet feels a deep despair, when he reflects that no knowledge or foresight for mortals is possible, but the gods accomplish everything according to their will; and because there is little hope of implanting virtue in men, then it were better not to be born at all and never to have seen the bright rays of the sun. But since this may not be, then he is most fortunate who enters Hades most quickly, and has a high mound of earth heaped over him.<sup>2</sup> Still there are other passages which show that man's case was not considered wholly hopeless. There is an appeal to self-pride, an expression of the

<sup>1</sup> 167 f.; 1075 ff. (cf. 583 f.).

<sup>2</sup> 425-431.

view that poverty is the test of a man, that has a tonic sound. The poet says that poverty reveals the worthless man and the superior whenever need of money comes on them, for the mind of the good man, whose thought is ever upright in his heart, thinks only of justice.<sup>1</sup> In another place he assures his young friend that the good man ever has his wit with him, and his courage, whether he be in adversity or in good fortune. But if a god gives abundance and riches to a base creature, then he in his folly cannot restrain his baseness.<sup>2</sup> Again the poet exhorts his own soul: "Endure, my soul, although thou hast suffered unendurable things at the hands of the wicked"; he bids it not be distressed or angry over misfortune and disaster, nor to blame friends or cheer enemies by failure: "For mortal man may not easily escape the fated gifts of the gods, though he dive into the very depth of the purple sea, or even when the dark shadow of Tartarus holds him."<sup>3</sup> Thus we see that the poet, in spite of his pessimism and of his realization of the hardship and injustice in the world, still urged his young friend to face it in the same spirit in which the later Stoics like Marcus Aurelius exhorted themselves to endure.

Although in the world as seen by the poets of the sixth century Zeus is supreme and the gods are the source of all things for mortals, their rule nevertheless is based on justice, which the gods love and which is their chief attribute. Opposed to justice is insolence (*ὕβρις*), which they detest and which they wish to punish.

<sup>1</sup> 383 ff.<sup>2</sup> 319 ff.<sup>3</sup> 1029 ff.

Archilochus addresses Father Zeus, declaring that his is the rule of heaven, and that he oversees all the works of man, both those which are base and those which are lawful, and has a care even for insolence and justice among wild beasts.<sup>1</sup> The statesman Solon assures the Athenians that their city will never come to ruin contrary to the will and intention of Zeus and the immortal gods; that ruin only can be brought upon the city by the citizens themselves, by the unjust spirit of the leaders of the people, whose mighty insolence will bring great suffering upon them. Like Aeschylus Solon believes and teaches that insolence must fail in the end and that Justice, who in silence knows all things both present and future, will recompense completely in due season.<sup>2</sup> In another passage Solon dwells on the fact that the riches which are sought with insolence bring doom quickly, and in striking verses compares the beginning of destruction with the spark which springs from a little fire, slight at first, but finally consuming all; even so are the results of insolence that fall upon mortals; for Zeus sees the end of all things: as the wind suddenly in the springtime quickly scatters the clouds, stirs up the sea, and works destruction over the grain-bearing earth, reaching to very heaven, the steep home of the gods, and makes the bright sky appear again, and the brilliant sun shine far over the rich earth, so that there are no longer any clouds to be seen; even so is the vengeance that comes from Zeus. Zeus is not quick to anger over each fault like mortal man, yet whoever

<sup>1</sup> *Fr.* 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Fr.* 4, 1-16.



has a wicked heart never escapes his notice, but in the end is utterly destroyed.<sup>1</sup> It would be possible to cite similar passages from other poets which show a deepening of that sense of the inevitableness of punishment which was first expressed in Hesiod.

Yet the problems of evil and of the justice of the gods were not satisfactorily solved for Theognis and his contemporaries. In two striking passages he criticizes Zeus, saying first: "Dear Zeus, I wonder at thee, for thou rulest over all things, having thrice great honor and great power, and thou knowest well the mind and will of each man, and thy own power is supreme over all, O King. How is it, then, son of Cronos, that thy mind endures to keep wicked men and the just subject to the same lot? Whether the mind of the one be turned to prudence or of the other, who trusts in unjust action, to insolence, there is no distinction made by god or mortals; nor is there any road which one may travel and please the gods."<sup>2</sup> In the second passage his reproach is the keener from the form of its expression: "Father Zeus, would that it might be the will of the gods that insolence be the pleasure of the wicked, and would that it might be their pleasure, that whoever contriveth wicked deeds in heart and thought, having no regard for the gods, should pay for his wickedness himself; and the folly of the father not harm the children thereafter; and would that the children of an unjust father, who themselves have just purposes and regard for thy wrath, Son of Cronos, they who from childhood love justice

<sup>1</sup> 13, especially vv. 11-32.

<sup>2</sup> 373-380.



along with their fellow citizens, might not pay for the insolence of their sires. I would that such might be the will of the blessed gods. But as it is, the man who does evil escapes, and another then bears the evil. How then is this just, King of the Immortals, that a man who has no part in unjust deeds should himself be treated unjustly?"<sup>1</sup> Here we have not only a recognition of the fact that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children even to the third and fourth generations — a truth which Solon had earlier enunciated,<sup>2</sup> — but also a protest against the injustice of it.

These are some of the conflicting expressions on morality, justice, and religion, which we find among the fragments of these early poets. The contradictions which they show need not surprise us, for we are drawing, as I have already said, from mere fragments written on various themes and for different occasions; so the record is inevitably imperfect. Nor must we suppose that the poets of this time had arrived at any clearer conceptions with regard to these fundamental questions than thinkers of a later age; the problem of evil, the justice of the divine economy, the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the good are matters which still baffle men as they did more than twenty-five centuries ago.

But let us now turn to the poets of the fifth century, above all to Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, of whose works we have considerable portions. These were poets whose position and genius made them the truest wit-

<sup>1</sup> 731 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Solon 13, 31 f.

nesses to the highest thoughts of Greece, and especially of Athens in that glorious period of her supremacy from the time of the Persian Wars through the Periclean age. The poetry of Pindar and of the tragedians was by its very nature connected with the service of the gods. The former wrote his odes to the victors who had won renown at the great national festivals of Zeus, Apollo, and Poseidon, or composed his hymns and paeans in honor of the divinities. The tragedians produced their plays for performance at the great festival of Dionysus. And yet we must be cautious here, as everywhere, since we are not always justified in attributing to the poet the sentiments which he puts into the mouths of his speakers. The tragedian's purpose was first of all artistic. While it is true that his own beliefs inevitably colored and tempered his work, still he never became a preacher. He dealt with traditional material, which he might modify somewhat, but in large measure his themes were determined for him. Yet there are many passages both in choral songs and in single speeches which certainly reflect the poet's own thought or his interpretation of the views held by his audience. The very strength of personality which Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides possessed made it impossible that they should not voice their own conceptions, and that too without violence to their poetic purpose. Pindar's work lay in different fields, but he no less than the tragedians helped to interpret and mould the moral and religious sentiments of his audience.

Pindar was born about 522 B.C. of a noble family near Thebes in Boeotia; but he belonged to all Greece. He

wrote in the first half of the fifth century when the influence of the preceding century was still strong upon men's minds, and he also shared the great stimulus which their country's victory over the Persians imparted to the Greeks. Of his personal devotion to the gods we have abundant evidence. He spent a part of his fortune in dedications at Thebes: there in the second century of our era the traveller Pausanias saw three statues which the poet had set up, one in honor of Apollo, another to Hermes, and a third, by the famous sculptor Calamis, which stood in the shrine of Zeus Ammon. To the Asiatic Cybele and to the new Arcadian Pan Pindar erected a shrine before his own door, where, as he himself tells us, the Theban maidens came by night and sang their hymns.<sup>1</sup>

Pindar shows throughout the pervasive influence of Homer, both in his conception of the gods and in his style as well. He makes no break with the Homeric anthropomorphism, and his divinities are subject to the needs and desires of mortals; but his concept is a noble one, for his gods are mighty and permanent, while men are transitory and weak: "One is the race of men and of gods; from one mother we have the breath of life. Yet in power we are wholly diverse: for man is nothing, but the brazen heaven abides, a home ever unshaken. Still we resemble somewhat the immortals either in lofty mind or in nature; yet we know not in the day or in the night what course fate has marked out for us to run."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pyth.* 3, 78 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Nem.* 6, 1 ff.

The power and the knowledge of the gods are in fact complete and perfect; they are not the limited creatures of the Homeric pantheon. With them resides all power, so that they easily bring things to pass beyond man's expectation. Their might may cause man's wonder, but "nothing ever appears to be incredible";<sup>1</sup> and in his second Pythian Ode the poet writes: "God bringeth every end to pass according to his desires. He overtaketh even the winged eagle and passeth the dolphin in the sea; and he bringeth low many a proud man, granting to others glory that grows not old."<sup>2</sup> And in the ninth Pythian Ode he speaks of Apollo thus: "Thou who knowest the final destiny of all things and all the paths thereto; all the leaves that the earth sends up in the spring, and all the sands whirled by the waves in sea and rivers and by the blasts of the winds; thou seest well the future and whence it shall come to pass."<sup>3</sup>

Pindar's gods are thus all-wise and all-powerful. At times he shows a certain tendency toward pantheism, for he speaks of god or divinity in a general sense, as if his mind conceived the divine nature to be one, so that the divinities were no longer several gods, but, as it were, bound together in a common divine unity. But we must not deceive ourselves into thinking that this pantheistic tendency was at all clearly developed in Pindar, or that he broke with polytheism. Rather he seems to have conceived of divinity as something which presents itself in many persons, the varied gods of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ol.* 13, 83; *Pyth.* 10, 49; *Frg.* 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Pyth.* 2, 49 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Pyth.* 9, 44 ff.

traditional pantheon. If we accept as genuine the fragment preserved by Clement of Alexandria,<sup>1</sup> in which the poet asks, "What is God?" and answers "The all," we can hardly think that this pantheistic definition means more than the universal cause; unless indeed it resulted from the Orphic pantheism. But whatever Pindar's views as to the unity of the divine, his teachings as to the gods' power are clear. He warns men that they cannot hope to avoid the gods' watchful eyes: "For if man expects to escape god's notice when he does aught, he is mistaken."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Pindar teaches that the gods, though the givers of both good and evil to men, like Homer's divinities, are nevertheless just and truthful beings who reward the righteous and reward and punish the wicked: "The bliss of men who feel reverence lives longer, but he who associates with wicked purposes prospers not forever."<sup>3</sup>

Truth also belongs to god, indeed she is "the daughter of Zeus", "the foundation of virtue." Of Apollo it is said that he "lays not hold of lies."<sup>4</sup> Here is a great advance over Homer's ideas of the godhead. Pindar's attitude in this respect is not dissimilar to that of Hesiod, who, as we have seen, first gave poetic expression to the idea that justice is an attribute and handmaid of Zeus.

Consonant with these higher views of divinity is Pindar's treatment of the myths. The grosser elements he leaves aside as being unworthy of the gods. At times

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Isth.* 3, 5 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ol.* 1, 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ol.* 10, 3; *Frg.* 205; *Pyth.* 3, 29.



he openly protests, as for example in the first Olympian Ode where he declares that he will not treat the story of Pelops in the traditional way, which made Tantalus offer his son's flesh at a dinner given the immortals: "I will speak differently from those who have gone before. I may not call any one of the blessed gods a cannibal."<sup>1</sup> This revolt against the current forms of myths was due in part to his belief in the moral perfection of divinity, in part to his moral sense concerning man. His rule was, as laid down by himself, that man should say only good things of the gods, and he shrank from attributing to the divinities things which it would be base for men to do. So in his fifth Nemean Ode he was unwilling to tell of the fratricide of the heroes Peleus and Telamon, but broke off his narrative abruptly, just as he rejected with indignation the shameful tales told of Tantalus. Furthermore Pindar subjected the myths and religious beliefs with which he had to deal to the test of reason; among the several versions that he found current he recognized that some must be false, and so he endeavored to separate the good from the evil, to control the traditions of his people, and thus to practise a free criticism in his work.

On the nature of sin Pindar, as the Greeks in general, holds that whenever man passes the bounds appointed between a mortal and a god, or between man and his fellowmen, he becomes thereby a sinner. Excess is the form of sin which he makes repeatedly his theme. When he praises Lampon of Aegina for "pursuing the mean

<sup>1</sup> *Ol.* 1, 52.

with his thought and maintaining it in his acts,"<sup>1</sup> he is recalling the principle laid down in Hesiod's verse, which had passed long since into a proverb: "Keep a middle course; the seasonable in all things is best."<sup>2</sup>

Again and again in varied forms he warns us to remember that man is mortal: "If one prosper and enjoy a good name, still seek not to become Zeus. Thou hast all, if ever perchance the fate to possess these honors should come to thee. Mortal things befit a mortal."<sup>3</sup> And again he says: "But if a man shall have wealth and excel other men in beauty, and if in the games he hath exhibited his strength and gained distinction, let him still remember that his garment wraps mortal limbs and that earth shall be the raiment of all in the end."<sup>4</sup> Sin then is presumption, and as such is punished by the gods. That "envy of the gods," which seems in Homer almost a childish resentment, is thus given an ethical value which coincides very closely with Aeschylus' interpretation of this belief. The moral character of Pindar's form of this doctrine is secured in part by the poet's apparent belief that man is a free moral agent. The sinner sometimes, like Ixion, might not be able to endure prosperity, and so fall into insolent pride, and thence into blind infatuation. In like fashion Bacchylides teaches that the giants were destroyed by insolent pride, whereas the path to happiness is open to all who will follow justice: "Warriors of Troy, Zeus, who rules on high and beholds all things, is not the author of

<sup>1</sup> *Isth.* 6, 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Isth.* 5, 13 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *W. and D.* 694.

<sup>4</sup> *Nem.* 11, 13 ff.

grievous woes for mortals; no, open before all men is the path that leads to unswerving Justice, attendant of holy Eunomia and prudent Themis: happy the land whose sons take her to dwell with them. But insolence — that spirit void of reverence, who luxuriates in shifty wiles and illicit follies — who swiftly gives a man his neighbor's wealth and power, but anon plunges him into a gulf of ruin — she it was who destroyed the Giants, overweening.”<sup>1</sup>

On the question of man's freedom Pindar is not entirely clear. And yet he seems to hold that man, and not some god, is responsible for his initial wrongdoing. But he also points out that when man has once given way to that insolent pride, which is presumptuous sin, then the gods in punishing him may drive him on his wrong course until the man is utterly ruined. This doctrine appears more clearly in Aeschylus.

When we come to Pindar's view of the life after death, we find that he has a more exalted vision than the poets of an earlier day. The ideas of immortality, of future rewards and punishments, of rebirth, and of a possible final bliss, which were current from the early sixth century at least, had not failed to have their effect on our poet. In a remarkable fragment he sets forth a doctrine as to the relation of body and soul which is very similar to that held by the Orphics, under whose influence he had evidently come: “The bodies of all men follow all-conquering death; but life's image still liveth on, for that only is from the gods. It sleeps

<sup>1</sup> Bacch. 14, 50-63 (Jebb).

when the limbs are active, but oftentimes in dreams it shows to the sleeper coming judgment, a judgment of peace and of pain.”<sup>1</sup> That is, when the body is awake it hampers the soul so that the soul is numbed as in sleep; but when the soul is free from the domination of the imprisoning flesh, it then enjoys its proper powers. There is a famous passage in the second Olympian which sets forth Pindar’s views of future reward and punishment. According to these lines, sins committed on the earth are punished beneath the earth, and those done beneath the earth are punished in the soul’s next reincarnation. So heaven and hell are always present to man’s soul, whether here in the light of the sun or in the darkness of Hades. Those from whom atonement is accepted in the lower world are allowed to return to the earth in high positions; when they have accomplished this rebirth thrice, if they have been just, they may enter into their final happiness. These are Pindar’s words: “The guilty souls of the dead straightway pay the penalty here on earth; and the sins done in this kingdom of Zeus are judged by one beneath the ground, who delivereth his judgment to hateful necessity. But ever in the night and in the day alike the good receive as their lot a life free from toil, enjoying the light of the sun. They vex neither the ground nor the water of the sea for food that does not satisfy, but among the honored gods, those who have found their pleasure in keeping their oaths enjoy a life free from tears; but the others bear suffering too great to look upon. Yet all those who have tarried thrice on either side (of death)

<sup>1</sup> *Frq.* 131.

and have persevered in keeping their souls wholly free from unjust deeds, travel the road of Zeus to the tower of Cronos. There the ocean breezes blow around the islands of the blest, golden flowers bloom, some from glorious trees on the land, others water feeds. With garlands the blest entwine their hands and crown their temples." <sup>1</sup>

We need not pause here to point out in detail the great contrast between Pindar's ideas of religion and those expressed in the Homeric and Hesiodic poetry. He presented a higher doctrine of future rewards and punishments, which was binding upon men in all the relations of this life; and he expressed a higher conception of morality and of justice, to whose obligations the gods as well as men were subject. The baser elements of mythology he refined away and elevated thereby men's ideas of the divine; and by making righteousness and truth the prime attributes of the gods, in accordance with which they punished the wicked and blessed the good, he lifted morality and religion to a nobler plane.

When we turn to the two older tragic poets, Aeschylus and Sophocles, we find that they teach doctrines very like those of Pindar, although naturally they dwell on those elements in religion and morality that are adapted to their tragic themes; and they differ between themselves in the points which they emphasize. Aeschylus makes prominent the punitive aspect of divine justice: he dwells upon the punishment which must inevitably follow sin, and which pursues a guilty line

<sup>1</sup> *Ol.* 2, 63 ff.



from generation to generation. The poet displays a moral earnestness and intensity like that of a Hebrew prophet, and he shows an extraordinary profundity in his handling of moral and religious themes; furthermore he is consciously a religious teacher. Sophocles keeps religion more in the background, using it as one of the materials which he as a literary artist can employ in his dramas; yet he is important as a religious poet for he lays especial stress on the necessity of purity of heart, which for him is the substance of piety toward the gods.

The elder tragedian, Aeschylus, was born at Eleusis about the year 525 B.C. Tradition told that he fought in the Persian wars and was wounded at Marathon. He began to present tragedies about the year 500, and continued to produce them until about three years before his death in 456. Aeschylus was a man of mighty concepts and massive thought, to which his condensed and pregnant style corresponds; a man of a profound and religious nature, strongly influenced by the Mysteries, he thought deeply upon the problems of men and of gods. He faced with honesty the contradictions involved in the current notions with regard to the moral nature of the gods, and in the ethical standards of men. Like Pindar he elevated and refined the traditional myths and made them a medium for the teaching of great moral truths.

Aeschylus regards the order of the universe as moral throughout. This view appears even in the *Prometheus Bound*, that unique drama of revolt. When we now read this tragedy alone, it seems as if Zeus were repre-

sented as a lawless tyrant, using his power and might in most unjust ways. But it is evident that if we had the other two plays of the trilogy, the sympathy which we feel with the Titan Prometheus would be lessened, that we should realize that the extant play represents the transition from violence to law, and that in reality the rule of Zeus is not one of might but one subject ultimately to the law of justice.

Although Aeschylus, like all of his day, was a polytheist, he exalts Zeus far above all other divinities. He regards him as preëminent, the possessor of all majesty and power, whose will always prevails, so that, when he speaks, the thing he wishes comes to pass. The poet uses the highest and most comprehensive epithets of him throughout his plays; in the *Supplices* the chorus appeal to Zeus as "King of kings, most blessed of the blessed, most perfect power of perfect powers; blessed Zeus"; and again they address him as "the one who rules through infinite time."<sup>1</sup> In other passages the poet seems to feel as if language were unequal to the task of describing adequately the majesty and power of this supreme god. In his mind Zeus surpasses the other gods so much that his will represents the whole of the divine laws; to him man inevitably turns in doubt and perplexity. As the chorus say in the *Agamemnon*:

Zeus — whate'er 'Zeus' expresseth of His essence —  
 If the name please him on the lips of prayer,  
 With his name on my lips I seek his presence,  
 Knowing none else I may with him compare.

<sup>1</sup> *Supp.* 524 f.; 574.

Yea, though I ponder, in the balance laying  
All else, no help save Zeus alone I find,  
If I would cast aside the burden weighing,  
All to no profit, ever on my mind.<sup>1</sup>

It is not impossible that Aeschylus cherished ideas of divinity which approached the pantheism or the henotheism of a later age. Clement of Alexandria has preserved two of his verses which are so extraordinary that we are glad to have them attested also by Philodemus.<sup>2</sup> When in these the poet says: "Zeus is the ether, Zeus the earth also; also the sky. Zeus is all things, and that which is above all things as well," this syncretistic expression may well be due to the influence of Orphism or of the philosopher Heraclitus; but whatever the source of the idea it stands at diameter with popular tradition. Of course it does not exclude the gods of the popular belief, who could be included in the divine unity, as later thought usually conceived them. That Aeschylus uses the gods of the people in his plays is not surprising, for the dramatic poet, whatever his personal belief, must always use material familiar to his audience and suited to his dramatic and poetic purpose.

In the *Prometheus Bound* the Titan threatens Zeus with Fate and declares that even he cannot escape Necessity. But we must remember that the *Prometheus*, as I have said before, is a drama which represents transition from the old order to the new, and that at the end of the trilogy there was no conflict between Zeus and Fate; and in general Aeschylus, though not always

<sup>1</sup> *Ag.* 160 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 70.

clear, most often represents Fate either as the will of Zeus himself or as his assistant. The former idea is again and again expressed in the Supplices, where the will of the supreme god is shown as something mighty and absolute which none may transgress.

But if Zeus is exalted to this supreme position, it is as a god of supreme justice. With the poet the ideas of justice and piety, injustice and impiety are equivalent. Like Hesiod he makes Justice the daughter of Zeus, whom Zeus always supports and avenges, "allotting duly ill to the wicked, blessing to the righteous." To the poet it is inconceivable that a god of perfect justice could desire anything in the world except what is right and just; and therefore he conceives that man's obligation is to strive after that which is just and righteous, and so to put himself into harmony with the divine will. A failure to do this is sin. Indeed the poet says that when men disregard justice they injure the gods, and more than once sin is spoken of as a disease of the mind. The sinner is a vain creature, laboring under a delusion which oftentimes springs from o'erweening pride and is doomed to bear tears for its fruit. The envy of the gods, which seems in Homer a childish thing, is in Aeschylus only the resentment which they feel toward a sinner who has been led away by success into insolent pride and so is doomed to punishment. In the Persians Xerxes is represented as having been swept away by his haughty insolence so that he lacked discretion (*σωφροσύνη*) and came to his doom. The shade of Darius says to the chorus:

Zeus sits above, a chastener of thoughts  
 Exceeding proud, a stern inquisitor.  
 Wherefore, since Heaven's warning bids be prudent,  
 Admonish him with counsel of wise speech  
 To cease from flouting Gods with reckless pride.<sup>1</sup>

And the armies of Xerxes were likewise doomed to pay the price of insolence and of their godless thoughts.

Furthermore Aeschylus teaches that good men must avoid the wicked, and illustrates the truth by the fact that it was evil companions who urged Xerxes to his folly. There is a striking passage in the *Septem* in which Eteocles, when informed that the seer Amphiaraus is among the heroes who are besieging Thebes, says:

Woe for the omen that with impious men  
 Joineth a righteous man in fellowship!  
 Than evil converse, in all enterprise  
 Nothing is worse; its harvest let none reap.  
 Infatuation's field hath death for fruit.  
 If the godfearing man for shipmates hath  
 A crew hot-hearted in iniquity,  
 With that god-hated tribe he perisheth:  
 The righteous man who dwells with citizens  
 Traitorous to guests and reckless of the Gods,  
 Is justly taken in the selfsame net,  
 Lashed by the same impartial scourge of God.<sup>2</sup>

We have just seen that Pindar shows a tendency to make man responsible for his sin, quite in contrast to the popular belief which still kept the Homeric view that the gods were responsible for all things. With this popular idea Aeschylus seems at times in accord. But

<sup>1</sup> *Pers.* 827 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Sept.* 597-608.



if we consider his plays in their entirety, he makes man responsible for the first step. In the *Eumenides*, for example, the Furies declare that no just man has ever put his hands justly to any deed and met their wrath. The lesson is that when men have taken the initial downward step themselves an evil divinity or daemon drives them on, but that the first step no man is forced to take. When, however, he has taken it, then the poet represents the sinner as through god's will infatuated with his sin. No other extant poet shows so impressively how sin relentlessly persists through generation after generation.

The most familiar illustration is found in Aeschylus' treatment of the story of the bloody line of Atreus, who sinned by slaying his brother's sons and offering their flesh, an unholy banquet, to their father; then Agamemnon's queen, with her paramour Aegisthus, slew her lord on his return from Troy; and finally Agamemnon's son Orestes murdered his mother and Aegisthus to avenge his sire. Thus through three generations the curse ran, each generation adding its own crime until only the divine intervention of Apollo and Athena could stay the course of sin and its doom. When in the *Choephoroe* Orestes has exacted his vengeance and stained himself with his mother's blood, the chorus finally sings:

Lo, how upon the palace royal hath burst  
 The third storm that fulfils the house's fate!  
 First, wretch Thyestes at a feast accurst  
 Of his own children ate:

Then shrieked the second storm the agony  
 Of that king in that laver hacked to death,

When the Achaians' chief to treachery  
There yielded up his breath:

Now on the third storm's wild wings down doth sweep  
A Saviour — or a Doom shall he be named ?  
Where shall the Curse end ? — how be lulled to sleep  
Its fury ? — how be tamed ? <sup>1</sup>

A similar theme was handled by him in his tragedies which dealt with the history of the royal house of Thebes. Against the warning of the oracle Laius married Jocasta; their son Oedipus slew his father and wed his own mother who bore him children. Under the burden of Oedipus' curse their two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, fell in fratricidal strife. These are dark bloody tales, but in the tragedies of Aeschylus they were given a fearful moral import. It is true that the same stories were handled by other tragedians, but by none with such moral impressiveness.

The mind of the poet was too searching and earnest to avoid the difficult problems which appear in real life when there is a conflict of duties. Such a conflict arises when Agamemnon has to choose between slaying his daughter and failing to do his duty by his country; again when Antigone at the close of the Seven against Thebes has to decide whether she will disobey the higher law which requires that the dead shall be buried, or resist the edict of the state which forbids her the service to her dead. Throughout the *Choephoroe* and *Eumenides* Orestes has to face the duty of avenging his father's death laid upon him by Apollo, and the pious reverence

<sup>1</sup> *Choeph.* 1065 ff.

which he should show his mother. The poet offers no satisfactory solution to such problems as these — indeed, his purpose in bringing them out clearly was probably dramatic rather than moral. Yet whatever his purpose, it is important for us to note that he realized the moral conflict clearly as a part of man's common experience.

I have already said that Aeschylus dwells chiefly upon the retributory nature of punishment, teaching that the sinner must suffer for his own deeds. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was no less binding in Greek than Hebrew justice:

Destinies, Mighty Ones, grant that from Zeus may the issue betide  
Even as Justice requireth, who now is arrayed on our side.  
'Ever the tongue of hate shall the tongue of hate requite:  
Aye for the stroke of murder the stroke of murder shall smite'  
Justice exacting her dues cries ringing-voiced this law.  
'Doers must suffer' — so sayeth the immemorial saw."

A law saith, 'Murder-drops of blood-libation  
On earth spilt, cry for blood in expiation.'  
The Avenging Sprite shrieks, hastening Havoc on  
Which brings from graves of men dead long ago  
Ruin to crown the work of ruin done.<sup>1</sup>

This principle runs through the entire trilogy of the Oresteia. Agamemnon lost his life in requital for the life of his daughter Iphigenia whom he slew with his own hand, and the murder of Agamemnon was avenged by the slaughter of Clytemnestra and her paramour. Throughout the three plays doom follows the criminal

<sup>1</sup> *Choeph.* 306 ff.; 400 ff.

relentlessly and only divine interference in the end clears the account. And yet at times Aeschylus teaches a gentler belief, that wisdom comes through suffering and constraint, and that it is through the discipline of pain that we travel the road to understanding.

Although Aeschylus lays overwhelming emphasis on the truth that punishment for sin falls upon the sinner in this life, he also teaches that there is punishment for the wicked in the world below. In his description of the dead there are many reminiscences of Homer. But his Hades is not Homeric; there is reality in punishment there no less than upon earth. In the *Eumenides* the Furies threaten Orestes thus:

Nay, I shall suck — thou canst not choose but pay the penalty —  
The red gore from thy living limbs, and win me out of thee  
The banquet of a draught that shall with awful anguish flow.  
Yea, I will waste thy living frame, then drag thee far below,  
There to pay all thy penalty, the mother-murder's woe.

So shall all else that have transgressed,  
Have sinned against a God, a guest,  
Or parents, mark how each receives  
The dues of sin that Justice gives.

For Hades 'neath the earth waits every soul,  
A mighty judge who watcheth to enscroll  
All sins on his eternal memory's roll.<sup>1</sup>

Of the rewards of the righteous in the next life Aeschylus has no word to say. There is no Elysium or Islands of the Blest.

Aeschylus represents the Athens of the Persian Wars; Sophocles belongs to the Periclean age. He was born fifteen years before the battle of Salamis and led the

<sup>1</sup> *Eum.* 264 ff.

chorus which sang a paean to celebrate the Greek victory. To his contemporaries his life seemed happy, as if he were beloved by the gods above all other men. In 468 B.C. he was successful in contending for the tragic prize with Aeschylus, and he continued to write until his death in 406. Instead of the rugged strength and passion that we find in Aeschylus Sophocles displays a sunny and gentle nature that naturally sought out the kindly and mediating elements in life. A conservative, he was not an innovator, critic, or teacher, as both Aeschylus and Euripides were; he does not make his characters reason much on the deeper things of life or criticize the traditional order.

Yet in one sense he is the most religious of the Greek poets, showing a faith in divine government and a wide outlook on the universe which the two other tragedians did not display. He does not break with the traditional belief as to the nature of the gods; indeed at most points he follows closely the Homeric conception; they are still to his mind the givers of evil as well as of good to men, and in fact his chorus in the *Antigone* quotes with approval the ancient saying that evil seems good soon or late to him whose mind the god draws to mischief.<sup>1</sup> Although he does not follow Pindar and Aeschylus in ascribing to divine beings a pure morality, yet he is inclined to believe with the elder poets that "Justice revealed from of old sits with Zeus in the might of the eternal laws."<sup>2</sup> There are only two passages in which his characters may be said to criticize the gods.

<sup>1</sup> *Antig.* 621 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *O. C.* 1381 f.



In the first *Philoctetes*, smarting under his suffering and neglect, exclaims:

No evil yet was crushed.  
The Heavens will ever shield it. 'Tis their sport  
To turn back all things rancorous and malign  
From going down to the grave, and send instead  
The good and true. Oh, how shall we commend  
Such acts, how construe them? When I extol  
Things god-like, I find evil in the Gods.<sup>1</sup>

But it must be observed that any other sentiment would have been out of character for *Philoctetes* at this point. The second is a fragment from his lost play, *Aleites*, in which some speaker, contemplating the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortunes of the good, declares that the gods ought not to order things thus for mortals, but that on the contrary the pious should have some evident profit from their piety and the unjust should pay the penalty for their wrongs that all might see.<sup>2</sup> But this fragment is so at variance in sentiment with Sophocles' general attitude that it has been conjectured, not without probability, that it came from Euripides. Even if we reject this conjecture, as I think we must, we need not suppose that the sentiments which the poet puts into the mouths of his characters always represent his real view. A dramatist, as we must remind ourselves, should make the speakers in his play express sentiments in harmony with their characters and for the most part will have them utter moral ideas with which most of his audience is in sympathy, unless indeed he would play the part of innovator or prophet. As a

<sup>1</sup> *Phil.* 446 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 103.

matter of fact Sophocles' own attitude seems to be expressed in another fragment: "No man is wise save him whom god honors; but if one look unto the gods, even if the god bid him depart from justice, there he must go. For nothing to which the gods lead men is base."<sup>1</sup> This seems the key to Sophocles' religious attitude. He is confident that however things may seem to us in our short-sightedness, if we could only see the purposes of the gods in their totality, we should know that they are good.

The bases of man's life and action, his highest duty, Sophocles teaches is piety and discretion, *σωφροσύνη*. When in the *Philoctetes* Heracles appears, he urges upon the heroes that when they return to Troy they be mindful, in laying waste the land, to show reverence towards the gods:

But, take good heed,  
Midst all your spoil to hold the gods in awe.  
For our great Father counteth piety  
Far above all. This follows men in death,  
And fails them not when they resign their breath.<sup>2</sup>

And the chorus sings at the end of the *Antigone*:

Wise thought hath the first place in happiness  
Before all else, and piety to Heaven  
Must be preserved. High boastings of the proud  
Bring sorrows to the height to punish pride: —  
A lesson men shall learn when they are old.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Ajax* Athena says:

Then, warned by what thou seest, be thou not rash  
To vaunt high words toward Heaven, nor swell thy port  
Too proudly, if in puissance of thy hand

<sup>1</sup> *Frq.* 226.

<sup>2</sup> *Phil.* 1440 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ant.* 1347 ff.

Thou passest others, or in mines of wealth.  
 Since Time abases and uplifts again  
 All that is human, and the modest heart  
 Is loved by Heaven, who hates the intemperate will.<sup>1</sup>

There is an extraordinary passage in the *Oedipus Coloneus* where Oedipus is made to say, when his strength fails him and he cannot go to the altar to sacrifice, but must send one of his daughters: "For I think that one soul suffices to pay this debt for ten thousand, if it come with loyal spirit to the shrine."<sup>2</sup> Piety, reverence, and purity, these to Sophocles are the highest qualities of man.

For the poet the moral order was unchanging, dependent not upon caprice but having a divine source and a divine sanction; the laws of heaven are therefore superior to those of man, and man's obedience to the higher law is made his duty and the means of his consecration. In an ode in *Oedipus the King*, which is called forth by the king's harshness and by the suspicion that he is not wholly guiltless, as well as by the queen's bold contempt for Apollo's oracle, the chorus sings:

O may I live  
 Sinless and pure in every word and deed  
 Ordained by those firm laws, that hold their realm on high!  
 Begotten of Heaven, of brightest Ether born,  
 Created not of man's ephemeral mould,  
 They ne'er shall sink to slumber in oblivion.  
 A Power of God is there, untouched by Time.<sup>3</sup>

That is, the chorus here pray that they may always show their piety and reverence by obeying the divine laws.

<sup>1</sup> *Ai.* 127 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *O. C.* 495 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *O. T.* 863 ff.

This sentiment is repeated more than once in the extant tragedies; as when Odysseus warns Agamemnon not to refuse burial to the body of Ajax: "'Tis not he, 'tis the law of heaven that thou would'st hurt.'" <sup>1</sup> Through this belief Sophocles justified Antigone in her decision to defy the edict of the state, for Creon had ordained that her brother Polynices might not be buried, since he had attacked Thebes. But Greek belief regarded it as a sacred duty of the next of kin to bury their dead, and this duty Antigone could not but fulfil, although she knew that death would be her lot. When Creon asks her if she did indeed dare to transgress his edict, she replies:

I heard it not from Zeus, nor came it forth  
 From Justice, where she reigns in the Underworld.  
 They too have published to mankind a law.  
 Nor could I think thine edict of such might  
 That one who is mortal thus could overrule  
 The infallible, unwritten laws of Heaven.  
 Their majesty begins not from to-day  
 But from eternity, and none can tell  
 The hour that saw their birth.<sup>2</sup>

It was for this same principle that Socrates, a generation later, gave up his life. In his defense he told his jury why: "Perhaps someone may say, 'But Socrates, can you not go off and live in exile, give up talking and be quiet?' This is the very point on which it is hardest to persuade some of you, for if I say that this is exile to be disobeying the god and therefore that it is impossible to keep quiet, you will not believe me, but will say

<sup>1</sup> *Ai.* 1343 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ant.* 450 ff.

that I am ironical.”<sup>1</sup> Socrates believed that he had a divine commission to question and examine others, and that duty he must perform as the heroine in the tragedy must perform hers, cost him what it might.

The eternal problem of human suffering, the fact that pain and misfortune are not always the result of wrong doing, but that the innocent suffer while the guilty escape, was a matter with which Sophocles was much concerned. His predecessor Aeschylus had tried to show in opposition to experience that sin always preceded pain; and in Sophocles the doom of Creon and his house is due to the king's proud resentment wherein he sinned against heaven's law. But in the same play the heroine Antigone, who has obeyed the divine mandates, is forced to suffer a most pathetic fate. King Oedipus was not intentionally guilty, and the fate of the innocent queen Deianeira surpasses in pathos that of any other tragic heroine. She was impelled by the tender desire to recall the love of her faithless husband, and the poet acquits her of blame, “She erred, though she intended well.”<sup>2</sup> But none the less she involved both husband and herself in dreadful doom.

The tragic poet found his solution of this ancient perplexing problem only in the larger view, which regarded the individual as but a slight factor in the economy of the whole. At times suffering was regarded as a means of discipline: “The soul that has been bedded in misfortune sees many things.”<sup>3</sup> Thus through pain one learns and develops his own nature. Theseus, in the

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Apol.* 37 E.

<sup>2</sup> *Tr.* 1136.

<sup>3</sup> *Frg.* 600.



Oedipus Coloneus, offers a kindly welcome to the exile Oedipus and his daughters, for his own sufferings in exile have produced a spirit of kindliness and charity in him. Oedipus himself in the same play is unlike the head-strong king of the earlier tragedy; suffering and time have chastened and enlightened him, though they have not made him mild in spirit.

Sophocles also displays great sympathy with human weakness and suffering. This appears in his treatment of the character of Deianeira, and above all in the tender pathos with which he brings out the human longings of Antigone, who though she has nobly obeyed heaven's unwritten law, yet shrinks from suffering and death and from the loss of all that youth promises. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find in Sophocles mercy emphasized as a divine attribute, and this quality in the gods held up as an example to men. On this Polynices makes his appeal to Oedipus:

But seeing that Zeus on his almighty throne  
Keeps Mercy in all he does to counsel him,  
Thou, too, my father, let her plead with thee!<sup>1</sup>

The sentiment is not far from Portia's plea:

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice.

Sophocles' sympathy for undeserved suffering, his understanding of the weakness of men, of their liability to error, and his faith in the gods, all led him to try to

<sup>1</sup> *O. C.* 1267 ff.

take the larger view of the ills of life, to which the philosopher Heraclitus had already given expression when he said that god does all things for the harmony of the whole; and that while men regard some things as right and others wrong, to god all things are fair and good and right. The individual is only a part of the great whole, and when human experiences are regarded *sub specie aeternitatis*, we shall find that that which seems evil is only permitted to make a just and harmonious unity. The poet tried to conceive of the life of man,

As a great whole, not analyzed to parts  
But each part having reference to all.

Looked at from this universal point of view the sufferings of Philoctetes, Antigone, Deianeira, and Oedipus are justified to men.

It was natural that Sophocles should use many Homeric concepts with reference to the condition of men and the life after death. In the Antigone alone is there any personal hope of future happiness. It may well be that the poet's sense of what was fitting dramatically is responsible for his conservative attitude: he was dealing with traditional material, and using themes and incidents which were far remote in time from his audience. It may have seemed to him that fidelity to his subject and the requirements of artistic unity prevented his putting into the mouths of his characters sentiments which an early age could hardly have conceived. Sophocles was not animated by the iconoclasm which we shall find in the bolder Euripides; but if the future life is not pictured in Sophocles' extant tragedies, we need not doubt for a

moment that he believed in immortality. He had been initiated into the Mysteries and one of the finest expressions of the ecclesiastical confidence that the initiates felt came from his pen: "Thrice blessed are those mortals who have seen these rites and then go to the house of Hades, for they alone have life there; but all others have only woe."<sup>1</sup>

Such, in brief, were the teachings of some of the greatest poets of the sixth and fifth centuries before our era. But these represent only one side of Greek thought in this time. In Athens there were influences, political, social, and intellectual, which were working profound changes. Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles belonged to an older order; the voices of the new age will concern us in our next lecture.

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 753.

## IV

### THE FIFTH CENTURY AT ATHENS

THE defeat of the Persians at Salamis in 480 B.C. made Athens the first state in Greece. Not only had she suffered enormous losses in the ruin of her city and lands for the common cause, but she had borne the brunt of the naval fight at Salamis, as ten years before, with the brave men from Plataea, she had driven the Persian hordes from the plain of Marathon into the sea. The Athenians had acquitted themselves well, for they had shown the loftiest patriotism and loyalty to the cause of Hellas; now their high position was recognized even by their jealous rivals. Athens entered on a brilliant period of fifty years which has never been equalled in the world's history. Within that time she produced statesmen, architects, artists, and poets who have never been surpassed since in any state in the same length of time. Her naval power, her wealth and culture, placed her in a supreme position.

Neither the Athenians nor the other Greeks forgot the gods to whom they believed that they owed their victory over the Persians. To Apollo at Delphi the allies sent a golden tripod set on a pillar of three bronze serpents bearing the names of those who had fought the invader;<sup>1</sup> the Athenians on their own account erected a trophy there, and on the Acropolis they soon set up a colossal

<sup>1</sup> Herod. IX, 81; Thuc. I, 132; Ditt.<sup>2</sup> 7.

bronze statue of Athena made by Phidias from the spoils captured at Marathon. A new temple to the goddess in place of the one destroyed by the Persians was begun, but for some unknown reason the work was not carried far. When Pericles was able to carry out his plans for adorning Athens, he determined to enlarge the structure; as a result the Parthenon with its wondrous sculptures and the great chryselephantine statue of the goddess rose above the town. At the entrance of the Acropolis a splendid propylaea was begun and many other public buildings were erected to adorn the city. The chief divinity of Athens, the goddess Athena, now held her position without a rival; all the other gods were in second place. The conception of the goddess was essentially that fixed by the Homeric poems, and as such Phidias represented her with aegis, spear, and shield, carrying victory in her hand. She became the embodiment of the power and the glory of the state.

In an earlier lecture I referred to the part which Pisistratus played during the sixth century in fostering Orphism at Athens and in developing the mysteries at Eleusis. Now the Athenian success in driving back the Persian invaders had filled the citizens with a spirit which had little desire for the sacraments of the Orphics, and furthermore the mysteries at Eleusis satisfied all longing for mystic assurance of security and of future happiness. But Pisistratus had also emphasized the Olympian religion as set forth in the Homeric poems. Indeed, we may say that he produced a Homeric revival; for little truth as there may be in the tradition that he



had the Homeric text fixed and written down in the Attic alphabet, there can be no question that he had made the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* more widely known by ordaining that the rhapsodes should recite them at the great Panathenaic festival. The emphasis given by him to the Olympian divinities had resulted in the exaltation of Athena and the subordination of most local cults to her worship on the Acropolis. It was Pisistratus also who had developed and given new magnificence to the Panathenaic festival. This was annual, but was celebrated with special splendor every fourth year. At these festivals the recitation of the Homeric poems brought before the people in impressive manner the whole pageantry of Olympus. The great procession with which the festival culminated — that procession known to us from Phidias' frieze upon the Parthenon — had as its objective point the Acropolis, where the sacred robe and other gifts were offered to the patron goddess, Athena. Her old temple on the site once occupied by the goodly house of Erechtheus had been adorned at the tyrant's orders with a peristyle and new pediment sculptures in which the battle of Athena Polias and the gods against the giants replaced the older sculptures, and the goddess rather than Zeus was now placed in the most prominent position. Thus Pisistratus had made the temple of Athena the center of the united Athenian state, and established the goddess as the chief divinity of Attica.

This Olympian religion was well suited to the state in the fifth century. The Athenian success in saving

Greece from the Persians had magnified the importance of Athens in the eyes of all her citizens. Their life was now one of action; they were proudly conscious of their expanding empire, their growing power, and increasing wealth. The joy which they felt in their present existence had something of the epic quality in it. Furthermore the growth of free democracy, which opened up many channels of successful activity through the state, had not yet resulted in that individualism with its disintegrating tendencies which marked the fourth century, and the common interests of the Athenians made the state the center of their thought. They regarded it as an organization existing for the benefit of all free citizens. Its unity and its power, so far as Athens was concerned, were symbolized by the goddess Athena. On her home and on her worship the resources of the state were lavished. It was inevitable that her religion should be regarded as primarily a state affair, and that at the same time she and the other protecting gods should seem to the individual citizen somewhat more removed from human interests and sympathy as they gained in the august majesty which the wealth of the empire lent them. Exactly as to many a Christian the wealth and magnificence of a splendid cathedral seem to put God farther away than the bare simplicity of some beloved chapel, so the Parthenon undoubtedly made Athena seem more august and more remote to many an Athenian than the rude and simple protecting deity of his country home.

The result of these various causes which were operative in the fifty years of Athens' greatness was that a part of religion became a state concern, and that men's loyalty was centered on the state. Patriotism and pride in empire took the place to a considerable extent of what may be roughly described as personal religion. This, of course, does not mean that a belief in the gods among the mass of the people had died out in any sense. The ordinary Athenian continued his worship as before at the local shrines and joined with the other citizens in paying tribute to the great divinities. But especially with many of the intellectual and leading men religion was absorbed, so to speak, into patriotism, much as has been the case in our own time in France and Italy. This attitude of mind finds supreme expression in the funeral oration of Pericles, which he pronounced over those who had died in the first year of the Peloponnesian War. His speech is devoted to glorifying the Athenians and to celebrating the noble service which the fallen rendered when they gave up their lives for their fatherland. There is not one syllable about the gods, one word of gratitude to heaven, or a single expression of solace to the relatives of the dead based on any hope of immortality. In the service of the state Pericles saw every incentive and every reward. This will be clear from the following paragraphs:<sup>1</sup>

“Such was the end of these men; they were worthy of Athens, and the living need not desire to have a more heroic spirit, although they may pray for a less fatal

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. 2, 43-44.

issue. The value of such a spirit is not to be expressed in words. Any one can discourse to you forever about the advantages of a brave defence, which you know already. But instead of listening to him I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her; and when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonor always present to them, and who, if they failed in an enterprise, would not allow their virtues to be lost to their country, but freely gave their lives to her as the fairest offering which they could present at her feast. The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them; for they received again each one for himself a praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchres — I speak not of that in which their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives, and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone, but in the hearts of men. Make them your examples, and esteeming courage to be freedom and freedom to be happiness, do not weigh too nicely the perils of war. The unfortunate who has no hope of a change for the better has less reason to throw away his life than the prosperous who, if he survive, is



always liable to a change for the worse, and to whom any accidental fall makes the most serious difference. To a man of spirit, cowardice and disaster coming together are far more bitter than death, striking him unperceived at a time when he is full of courage and animated by the general hope.

Wherefore I do not now commiserate the parents of the dead who stand here; I would rather comfort them. You know that your life has been passed amid manifold vicissitudes; and that they may be deemed fortunate who have gained most honour, whether an honorable death like theirs, or an honorable sorrow like yours, and whose days have been so ordered that the term of their happiness is likewise the term of their life. I know how hard it is to make you feel this, when the good fortune of others will too often remind you of the gladness which once lightened your hearts. And sorrow is felt at the want of those blessings, not which a man never knew, but which were a part of his life before they were taken from him. Some of you are of an age at which they may hope to have other children, and they ought to bear their sorrow better; not only will the children who may hereafter be born make them forget their own lost ones, but the city will be doubly a gainer. She will not be left desolate, and she will be safer. For a man's counsel cannot have equal weight or worth, when he alone has no children to risk in the general danger. To those of you who have passed their prime I say: 'Congratulate yourselves that you have been happy during the greater part of your days; remember that your life of



sorrow will not last long, and be comforted by the glory of those who are gone. For the love of honor alone is ever young, and not riches, as some say, but honor is the delight of men when they are old and useless.'"

The loyalty to the state, however, which animates this oration we must remember actually resulted in the glorification of Athena and the other great gods. For they, too, were a part of the state, and had a share in its reputation and prosperity. But I must point out again that in this exaltation of the Olympic gods there was nothing of that personal relation of the individual to divinity, such as must exist in every really religious age.

Yet at the risk of repetition, I would recall the fact that the practice of religion by individuals had not ceased at Athens. The common man still paid devotion to his guardian gods, made offerings to the dead, and shared in many forms of worship. Furthermore the spread of the Eleusinian mysteries in this century, so that a new and larger initiation hall had to be erected at Eleusis, shows that thoughts of the future life and the deepest religious feelings still existed in large numbers of the citizens. We have here, then, an apparent contradiction, such as has appeared many times and in many places in the religious history of man. Many of the leaders of the state were interested in religion only as it was an affair of state, in the same way in which the army and navy were. On the other hand there were large numbers who felt a more personal interest in religion and who cultivated a more personal relation to divinity. Nor were there lacking men of the most intellectual class

to deal with the higher concepts of religion which had been developing during the recent centuries. These ideas find their truest utterance in the work of the poets, and we have already seen how Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles interpreted nobler views with regard to the gods, human conduct, and man's relation to the divinities, to all Greece and especially to Athens which had now become the intellectual center of the Hellenic world.

But another new force had been developing among the Greeks during the sixth century which was destined to deal a far greater blow to traditional religion than any other — I mean philosophy. This began in Ionia and was cultivated in other parts of greater Greece before it came to Athens. But after the Persian Wars the prominence and prosperity of that city was so great and her intellectual eminence was so high that she attracted the men of note in many departments of life. Among them was the philosopher Anaxagoras of Clazomenae who made Athens his home for about thirty years (c. 462-432 B.C.). He became a member of the most intellectual Athenian society of his day, a friend of Euripides, and an intimate of Pericles. When dangers began to threaten the state, with the prospect of war looming on the horizon, the people began to blame their great leader; to injure him, they banished one and another of his friends. The two most noted were Phidias the sculptor, of whose art the marbles of the Parthenon are still the unsurpassed witnesses, and Anaxagoras the philosopher; the charge against both was impiety. Anaxagoras taught that the sun was a red hot mass of rock, as

the moon was a cold mass, like the earth. According to this teaching the sun and moon could no longer be regarded as gods, so that a charge of impiety was as easily based on such doctrines as it was on the teaching of Galileo twenty centuries later. But although the philosopher was driven out, philosophy could not be so easily banished. The eager intellectual life of Athens had caught the spark, and the flame of philosophy was never extinguished on the Athenian altars for almost a thousand years, until the Emperor Justinian closed the philosophic schools in 529 A.D.

Now philosophy aimed from the very first to explain the origin and structure of the universe by reducing all things to a single principle or to a few principles at most. The purpose of the philosopher was to carry out a more systematic search for unity than the thought of the poet or of the ordinary man could accomplish. We have seen how Hesiod and the Orphics tried by cosmogonies to explain the origin of the world. The philosophers turned to physical science for their explanation. But in every case their work was from its very nature antagonistic to popular polytheism, which saw a separate divinity in every phenomenon. It was inevitable that the conflict should become an open one sooner or later.

Xenophanes of Colophon (flor. c. 540 B.C.) was the first to enter the lists. Driven into exile by civil disturbances at about the age of twenty-five, he lived most of his life in Sicily. He was as much a social and religious reformer and satirist as philosopher. With a

frankness which passed beyond the freedom of his age he struck at the popular beliefs with regard to the gods, which taught that the gods were born and had clothes and voices and forms like mortals. He illustrated the folly of the Greeks in making the gods after their own image by reminding them that the Ethiopians made their gods flat-nosed and black, and the Thracians theirs blue-eyed and red-haired, while if cattle and horses and lions had but hands and could draw and mould and fashion like men, then each would draw and fashion the gods in his own image.<sup>1</sup> For the current notions of divinity he held Homer and Hesiod responsible and charged that these poets had attributed to the gods everything that was reckoned as shame and reproach among men — stealing, adultery, and cheating.<sup>2</sup> He likewise opposed the doctrine that the gods had taught men their knowledge, but declared that man had always learned through experience and investigation the better way for himself.<sup>3</sup> Xenophanes went even further than this and used the science of his day to prove that what was regarded as the appearances of the gods was merely meteorological phenomena. In the place of many gods he declared that there was but one, and he not like mortal men either in form or intelligence, but that he was wholly sight, wholly intelligence, wholly hearing — that is to say, god and the universe are identical, and the cosmos is eternal, sentient, and intelligent.<sup>4</sup> There could hardly have been a greater contrast than between

<sup>1</sup> *Frægg.* 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Frægg.* 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Frægg.* 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Frægg.* 23-26.



this pantheism and the polytheism of the day. It is true that Xenophanes offers no adequate explanation of the way in which phenomena arise; he does not solve the problem of deriving the transient out of that which is permanent and fixed. But nevertheless he crudely anticipated the thought of later philosophers and theologians and began the open struggle with polytheism which was to continue for many centuries.

Another philosopher who deserves our attention here is Heraclitus of Ephesus who flourished in the early fifth century. As he surveyed the world he was impressed with the variety of phenomena that moved before him, with the fact that nothing is stable but that everything is always in process of change. He declared therefore that nothing is permanent but that all things in reality are in a state of flux and flow (*πάντα ῥεῖ*). The explanation for this constant change he apparently found in the crude science of the day which observed that changes in temperature cause changes of form, some solids becoming liquid and liquids gaseous. This phenomenon he thought was due to fire. Fire he regarded as universal in the cosmos — indeed, as identical with it, and he is reported as saying that this universe, which is the same for all beings, no god or mortal has made, but it has always been and is and ever will be eternal fire, which sometimes grows the brighter and again is quenched. This fire he is willing to call god; it is to him the principle which permeates the universe and causes all change within it. Such being the case, Heraclitus maintains that true knowledge is not concerned



with many things but solely with the unity in the world which his teachings set forth. In his scorn for his predecessors he outdoes Xenophanes. Not only Homer and Hesiod, but Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Archilochus, and Hecateus are alike condemned. Homer and Archilochus he declares deserve to be driven from the games and flogged, such folly had they taught.<sup>1</sup> In his assaults on the popular religion Heraclitus did not concern himself so much with mythology as with the rites and ceremonies current in his time. He evidently attacked the representatives of the mystery religions, calling them night walkers, magi, priests of Bacchus, devotees of the wine-vat, and mystery-mongers. In another fragment he ridicules those who pray to the images of the gods, for that is as if one were to pray to a man's house; and again he declares that if men on ordinary occasions sang songs like the hymns which they raise in honor of Dionysus they would be acting most shamelessly. Man's duty to his mind is to devote himself wholly to the apprehension of the divine unity in the world, of that wisdom to which alone he would consent to give the name of Zeus.<sup>2</sup>

We have now seen from these two representatives how philosophy regarded traditional polytheism, and taught that the unity of the universe was identical with god. But neither Xenophanes nor Heraclitus offered any satisfactory explanation of the way in which multiplicity could arise out of unity. Still less did they con-

<sup>1</sup> *Frsgg.* 1, 2, 30, 31, 40-42; cf. 57, 67, 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Frsgg.* 14, 15, 29, 32, 41, 128.

ceive of a personal god. This concept was reserved for Plato or possibly for his great teacher. A slight approach toward an explanation of variety was made, it is true, by Heraclitus, through his "fire" and also through a doctrine which I have not mentioned, namely that "strife," the action of opposites, is the cause of change. Now another philosopher, Empedocles of Agrigentum, whom we have already met as a mystic, offered an explanation of the cause of phenomena not dissimilar to that of Heraclitus, and yet one that marked an advance. For his elements Empedocles took the four of popular belief — earth, air, fire, water, which he said were combined in various forms by the principles of "friendship" and of "strife"; or, as we should say today in less symbolic language, by affinity and incompatibility. But like Heraclitus Empedocles fails to make clear how or why these principles act at all on his elements. In short before Anaxagoras no thinker conceived of any satisfactory formative or motive principles to explain phenomena; likewise none had arrived at a well defined distinction between a material principle and a formative principle. Anaxagoras solved the problem in a way highly satisfactory for his age and in a manner which unconsciously anticipated many of the principles of modern science. According to him all substances are elementary, existing in seeds or germs, infinite in number, infinitesimal in size. Aristotle and the ancients in general understood him to mean that these seeds or germs are minute particles of the things which we know in the mass, as for example bread or water, or flesh and

bones. Some modern scholars think that he meant that the original mass of matter was infinitely divided and that every atom had in it a portion of everything else: the various combinations of these seeds, atoms, we name bread, water, or flesh and bones according to the predominance of these things in the seeds which make up the whole. Yet whether Aristotle and the ancients or the moderns be right is a matter of little moment to us now. Anaxagoras thought that these "seeds," whatever they were, were set in motion and combined to produce the infinite diversity of the natural objects by Mind (*Nóus*).

Anaxagoras' great service, then, was his introduction of Mind into philosophy as a formative, a motive principle to provide the cause for change and diversity. It is not to be denied that Anaxagoras conceived his principle to be as material as the elements themselves, and that he did not employ his principle fully, even after he introduced it into the world. Indeed, he did not advance beyond a mechanical concept of the cause of phenomena. But nevertheless he is significant in the history of European thought as the founder of the dualistic system which largely prevailed thereafter. His contemporaries, too, recognized him as an innovator, for we are told that the wits of Athens nicknamed him "Mind." With the consequences of this new dualism we shall be much concerned hereafter.

Another group of men contributed to the intellectual life of that wonderful fifty years of Athenian history which began with the defeat of the Persians and ended

with the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. How keen the intellectual life of that time was is shown by the high excellence of the plays to which the masses of the common citizens listened in the theater. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were not enjoyed by the few but by the great body of Athenian citizens, and their plays were known even among the remote Greek colonies. The intellectual spirit of the age was stimulated to inquiry and to scepticism. Herodotus is wholly sceptical, and the agnostic tendency of the time is shown by the entire lack of mythology and superstition displayed by Thucydides. A further stimulus was furnished by the development of a higher education given by professional teachers — the Sophists.

The last half of the fifth century is often called with good reason the "Age of the Sophists." We must understand clearly just what we mean by this term as applied to the men of this time, for today the word sophist has an unfavorable connotation. The Sophists of the fifth century neither formed a philosophic school nor were they charlatans. The most prominent among them was Protagoras of Abdera whose ability and character is shown by the fact that Pericles selected him to draw up the laws for Thurii in 444-43 B.C. Gorgias of Leontini in Sicily enjoyed such high reputation that in 427 he was sent at the head of an embassy to Athens. These Sophists were simply men devoted to the pursuit of wisdom, frequently professional teachers who undertook to give a general culture, to train their pupils to take part in society and the state. For the old training



which had been gained by observation they substituted a formal discipline; they offered instruction in rhetoric, politics, music, in short in all the higher branches, as we should call them. But they had no unity of doctrine. By the close of the fifth century they had fallen somewhat into disrepute and were under suspicion, since in the Athenian state all the youths who could afford to pay the fees which these professional teachers charged belonged to the aristocratic class, which frequently voted against the democracy. The Sophists owed their great influence to the fact that they met an actual need in the small society of Athens which included an unusual number of men with eager alert minds and great intellectual curiosity. Now it should be observed that rhetoric, which formed a considerable part of the new education introduced by these professional teachers since political life was the chief career open to a young Athenian, led to habits of examination, analysis, and definition. We are all familiar with the fact that any attempt to analyze and define customary beliefs and practices is pretty certain to detect inconsistencies unobserved before; to lead, at first at least, to confusion and to doubt as to the validity of the practice or belief under consideration; and that when applied to traditional morality or religion it is likely to loosen the obligations which men have hitherto regarded. For illustrations of this truth we have only to look about us and to see how in this generation, as in the generations of our fathers, long accepted beliefs have crumbled before examination, as for example the institution of



slavery, the justice of which few questioned a century and a quarter ago. So it was inevitable that in Athens some of the effects of the sophistic teaching should be destructive. And these effects were exaggerated by the great store which was set on skill in disputation. When moral or religious themes were under discussion, the point at issue was not the value of this or that position, but rather the relative skill of the disputants. We are so familiar with this in academic life, in college debates, for example, that the question of the moral effect does not rise in our minds. But it is little wonder that in the fifth century in Athens the Sophists were charged with making the worse cause the better.

Furthermore the Sophists were sceptical as to the possibility of acquiring absolute knowledge about anything. This scepticism may have been due to a failure on the part of the science of the day which led individuals to turn from nature to man as the object of their inquiry. Protagoras maintained that all knowledge was relative, since the only way in which a man can know anything is through his senses; through them he perceives that an object is hot or cold, round or square, sweet or bitter. He pointed out, also, that the same object will not always appear the same even to the same individual; hence he declared that there is no such thing as absolute truth, but that whatever seems true to you or to me at the moment is the truth for you or for me, and that it is not at all necessary that you and I should hold the same thing to be true at one and the same time. Whatever seems to the individual true is

true, according to him. From this came his famous dictum that man, that is the individual, is the measure of all things.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that this doctrine when applied to politics, morals, or religion was upsetting.

So long as men studied nature, they were concerned with discovering the inflexible laws which govern the world. But when they turned their attention from nature to society or government, they realized that human institutions seemed to be the result on the whole of conventions agreed upon and adopted by mankind. The Sophists held in general that the form of the state, the current moral and religious beliefs and social customs had no absolute validity; that they were the results of convention; and that their only warrant was that they worked well in practice, that they were profitable to the individual and to society. This pragmatic view of institutions fell in well with the temper of the last half of the fifth century, both in the period of Athens' imperial supremacy and in the time of her trial during the Peloponnesian War, when in passion or despair the people disregarded law and, as in the case of the Melians, all that humanity had counted sacred. It was an age when many held that might and right were identical, and for this view the Sophists, even though unwittingly, furnished arguments; for if the test of an institution or act is that it works well when put into practice, success proves validity. The Sophists, too, taught that virtue (*ἀρετή*) was nothing else than what we call today efficiency. It is not strange that the

<sup>1</sup> *Frg. I.*

conservative Athenians came to look on them with suspicion.

With regard to the gods Protagoras was naturally agnostic. He began his "Treatise on the Gods" with the words: "So far as the gods are concerned, I cannot know whether they exist or do not exist; or what their nature is. Many things prevent our knowing. The matter is obscure and life is short."<sup>1</sup> One may be curious to know what large matter Protagoras found for his discussion when he began with this frank confession of ignorance; but it should be observed that in this confession there is nothing necessarily antagonistic to the popular theology of his day. It only shows what the words plainly declare, that a belief in the gods cannot depend upon knowledge. Another Sophist, Prodicus, maintained that the divinities were nothing but the kindly powers of nature which man had deified;<sup>2</sup> and the "Gentle Critias," one of the worst of the Thirty Tyrants, and a ready pupil of the earlier Sophists, is said to have set forth in a satyric drama the theory that the gods were the clever invention of someone who wished to scare men out of their desire to do evil.<sup>3</sup> The effect of such scepticism and agnosticism we can easily imagine.

Many things had been wrongly laid at the door of the Sophists, but it is small wonder that the conservative Athenian citizens came to look with distrust and alarm on these new-fangled subversive notions; that they

<sup>1</sup> *Fr.* 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Fr.* 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Fr.* 25 = 1 Nauck<sup>2</sup>, pp. 770 ff.

banished Protagoras and burned his books in the market place; or finally that they should have put Socrates to death.

Into this age of intellectual ferment and readjustment, of scepticism and eager inquiry, the age of Anaxagoras and the Sophists, Socrates entered. He was at once the child of his time and the greatest fecundator of men's minds that Europe had yet known. He was born in 469 B.C. and was forced to drink the hemlock in March, 399, so that he had completed the allotted span of life. The son of a sculptor, we are told that he followed his father's profession in his youth, but apparently he did not continue this long. Whence he derived the means of livelihood we do not know. He received the regular Athenian education, was interested especially in geometry and astronomy; the works of the philosophers he had read, but professed that he gained little from them. One is tempted to dwell on the picturesque characteristics of this man — his refusal to teach for pay, as did the ordinary teachers, his profession of complete ignorance — his only claim to wisdom, he said himself, — his ugliness of feature, and his beauty of soul, his omnivorous interest in the work of the humble craftsmen, above all on his belief that he had a warning spirit, a daemon, which checked him when his course was wrong. Although in obedience to this inward monitor Socrates refrained from politics, he fulfilled all his civic duties in peace and in war. He conformed to the traditional religion, sacrificing and praying to the traditional gods, although he undoubtedly did not hold that

they were the limited and sensual creatures of the popular belief. When he prayed he asked not for gold or silver or power, but for what the gods knew was good for him. At the close of Plato's *Phaedrus* he offers this appeal: "Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, grant me beauty of the inward soul, and make the outward and the inward man to be but one." This was the man who was charged with corrupting the youth of Athens.

Socrates had much in common with the Sophists. Although it is evident that in his earlier years he had been interested in physical science, we know that he turned away from that in the course of time, convinced that man alone was more than man could understand. He rather confined his attention to man himself, and made man and his conduct the center of philosophic inquiry. With the Sophists Socrates held that the cultivation of excellence, of virtue, whatever that might be, was the chief thing. He also identified virtue and knowledge, and like the Sophists was sceptical as to man's ability to attain absolute knowledge. Practicability was the test he applied to various opinions. If one notion as to the state or society or anything else worked better than another, it was, therefore, in his view the better; and according to him it was by the adoption of such useful opinions that the individual became the wiser man. He held that education does not consist in putting things into people's heads, but in leading them to discover the truths which they already possess. He therefore employed discussion as to the



validity of hypotheses to bring out the latent knowledge in the minds of his young friends. This method of his — dialectic — was not identical with that of the Sophists apparently, but was not unlike theirs. It was, therefore, natural that his own time should have reckoned him as one of the professional class.

How then was he distinguished from these Sophists? Externally, first of all, by the fact that he did not teach for pay, that his purpose was unselfish, his interest being solely the elucidation of truth and so the establishment of virtue. He himself believed that he had a divine commission to serve the Athenians as a missionary. Plato makes him declare in his defence before his judges: "Men of Athens, I should be guilty of a crime indeed if through fear of death or anything else I should desert the post to which I am assigned by the god. For the god ordains . . . that I should follow after wisdom and examine myself and others."<sup>1</sup> He conceived of himself as the physician of the soul, and maintained that his whole business was "to persuade all, both young and old, not to care about the body or riches, but first and foremost about the soul — how to make the soul as good as possible."<sup>2</sup>

As I have already said, he believed that if men could only know what justice, goodness, and temperance were they would naturally and inevitably be just and good and temperate. Vice he thought was due to a lack of knowledge; therefore he employed his questioning, dialectic, to endeavor to secure clear definitions of these

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.* 28 E.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.* 30 A.

and other virtues, for he was convinced that if only he and his associates could discover what virtue was, they would at once pursue virtue and flee from all wrongdoing. We may smile at the naïveté of this belief, that virtue is something that can be taught, that to be practised it needs only to be seen; but we must remind ourselves that his confidence was based on another belief, which was that virtue is the best and the most profitable for the individual; and that since each man desires the best for himself, if he sees what is right, he will follow that course unswervingly to the end. It may be said with reason that this is a utilitarian view, and so it is; but in Socrates it was combined with a power of will which enabled him to translate his convictions into reality, for it was in obedience to this conviction that the great teacher gave up his life. .

Thus far we have seen that in the ferment of the last part of the fifth century in Athens there were two forces which were in a sense opposed to each other, the Sophists with their inevitable scepticism, who taught that all truth was subjective, that justice and goodness were only that which seemed just and good to the individual; opposed to them in reality was Socrates, not only in spirit but also by the doctrine which he endeavored to establish; for his search was always directed at finding the reality, was always aimed at knowledge in opposition to opinion. These objective truths, the universals, which to him were the only real things in the world, he endeavored to obtain by a process of definition which was not wholly adequate; but he turned men away from mere observation, from what seemed to be true, to

search for permanent objective reality. How fruitful his teaching was, was shown by many schools, but above all by his greatest pupil, Plato. His followers have lasted to the present day.

The last third of the fifth century was a new era for Greece. The Peloponnesian War broke out in the year 431, and lasted until 404. On the one side was Athens with the empire which she had boldly built and somewhat ruthlessly held; on the other was a large number of allied states of Greece with Sparta at their head. The war ended with the complete humiliation of Athens. She lost her empire, her wealth, and a large part of her population. These disasters gave opportunity and occasion for new forces to come to the front. Early in the war the mercurial Athenians had shown themselves impatient of the leadership which had made Athens great, and they rejected Pericles. They were easily led astray by wild schemes, as when they followed the imperialistic party headed by Alcibiades and sent out the Sicilian expedition in 415, which was to meet irreparable disaster two years later. In time of distress, under the burden of political and economic misfortune, men often turn to reconsider the bases of their beliefs and actions, to test the validity of the doctrines which have hitherto guided them. This was the case at Athens. The old beliefs went by the board; society, government, and religion all became subjects of doubt and of reexamination.

The greatest spokesman of this time was Euripides. Although he was the younger contemporary of Sophocles, who outlived him by a few months, Euripides

belongs to a new age. The former represents imperial Athens of the age of Pericles, the latter the Athens of the Peloponnesian War. Born of a family apparently well-to-do he certainly received a liberal education. Politics and society seem never to have attracted him to active participation in them, but the intellectual life of his time he shared to the full; and more than any extant writer of his day, he shows that he felt the force of the movements which were transforming Athenian thought. It has been aptly said that in Sophocles the poetical course of traditional religion culminated; in Euripides we have for the first time the poetic and philosophical development fully combined. He was a profound thinker, troubled by the most difficult problems of humanity, and approaching tradition with the liberal frankness of the new age. Yet we must always bear in mind that he was a dramatic poet, not a systematic theologian or moral teacher. Again and again fidelity to his art made him put sentiments into the mouths of his characters which must have been abhorrent to him. Nor have we any right to search for some hidden meaning in his plays. Yet after all allowances have been made, we cannot doubt that in his dramas he frequently expresses his personal views on politics, morals, and religion, which were quite at variance with the views of tradition.

Toward the gods of the current mythology no one could have been more frankly sceptical or scornful than he. As Nestle, a German critic, has pointed out, the basic principle of his attacks is found in his verse:



εἰ θεοί τι δρῶσιν αἰσχρόν, οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοί.<sup>1</sup>

If the gods do aught that is base, then they are not gods.

That is, as the same critic says, for Euripides "God and sin are mutually exclusive terms." Sophocles held the same belief, yet his point of view was wholly different, as is shown by his verse:

αἰσχρόν μὲν οὐδὲν ὧν ὑφηγοῦνται θεοί.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing to which the gods lead men is base.

That is, whatever the gods do is good no matter how it may seem to man. There is then a fundamental difference between the two tragedians: the elder has faith to believe in the righteousness of the traditional gods, the younger is ready to throw tradition over. The unreasonableness and immorality of popular beliefs and the baffling existence of evil in the world Euripides could not reconcile with a faith in the existence of all powerful and just beings such as he held the gods must be, if they exist at all. His firm conviction that divinity, if it have any existence, must be absolutely just, explains the poet's boldness in holding up to scorn the popular notions. In the *Hippolytus* he exhibits the goddess of love in a shameful light, and makes Artemis join with the innocent hero of the play in condemning her.

Indeed throughout the tragedy the traditional beliefs are treated with powerful irony. When Phaedra is filled with shame at the passion for her step-son with which Aphrodite has inspired her, the nurse tempts her

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 292, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 226, 4.



to yield, quoting ancient tales of the celestials' amours as examples:

Whoso have scrolls writ in the ancient days,  
And wander still themselves by paths of song,  
They know how Zeus of yore desired the embrace  
Of Semele; they know how radiant Dawn  
Up to the gods snatched Cephalus of yore,  
And all for love; yet these in Heaven their home  
Dwell, neither do they flee the face of Gods,  
Content, I trow, to be love's vanquished ones.  
Thou — wilt not yield? <sup>1</sup>

Nay, darling, from thy deadly thoughts refrain,  
And from presumption — sheer presumption this,  
That one should wish to be more strong than Gods.  
In love flinch not; a God hath willed this thing. <sup>2</sup>

But Phaedra dies by her own hand rather than yield to the goddess's design. The innocent Hippolytus, second victim of divine injustice, cries out as he dies:

Innocent I, ever fearing the Gods, who was wholly heart-clean  
Above all men beside, —  
Lo, how am I thrust  
Unto Hades, to hide  
My life in the dust!  
All vainly I revered God, and in vain unto man was I just. <sup>3</sup>

What greater condemnation of the traditional gods could there be than this!

In the Hercules Hera drives the hero mad and makes him the slayer of his own innocent children, all because of the goddess's jealousy of Zeus. Small wonder that Hercules cries when the truth is brought home to him:

<sup>1</sup> *Hipp.* 451-459.

<sup>2</sup> *Hipp.* 473-476.

<sup>3</sup> *Hipp.* 1365-1369.

To such a Goddess  
Who shall pray now ? who, for a woman's sake  
Jealous of Zeus, from Hellas hath cut off  
Her benefactors, guiltless though they were.<sup>1</sup>

The hero refuses to find any consolation for his woes in the suggestion that the gods too have sinned and suffered for their wrongs — “ if minstrel legends be not false.” Whereat he exclaims:

I deem not that the Gods for spousals crave  
Unhallowed: tales of Gods' hands manacled  
Ever I scorned nor ever will believe,  
Nor that one God is born another's lord.  
For God hath need, if God indeed he be,  
Of naught: these be the minstrels' sorry tales.<sup>2</sup>

This play then like the Hippolytus is a condemnation through Hera and Zeus of the whole system of gods.

In these sentiments there is something more than direct defiance of tradition. Euripides does not, like Pindar, refine away the baser elements of legends; or, like Aeschylus and Sophocles, obscure the uglier features of the ancient mythology. On the contrary, constrained by his profession as dramatic poet to draw his themes from the dark tales of gods and heroes in a mythological age — tales whose immorality was wholly hateful to him — he accomplishes his purpose by showing these gods and heroes on his stage engaged in actions and prompted by motives which are so base as to destroy the spectator's regard for beings of such a sort, and to win the onlooker's sympathy for the mortal victim against the higher power. To the shameless natures of

<sup>1</sup> *H. F.* 1307 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *H. F.* 1341 ff.

the gods the poet bluntly gives fitting characterizations: he names them cruel, vengeful, treacherous, licentious.

Euripides is no less iconoclastic in dealing with current religious practices; there is none that escapes his scorn. Sacrifices and votive offerings seem to him unworthy of true gods. The folly of popular wonder at the riches of temples is brought out in a fragment of the lost *Philoctetes*, in which the hero sarcastically bids his hearers see how even the gods prize gain, and therefore men should not hesitate to get profit and thereby make themselves equal to the gods.<sup>1</sup> That it is not the size of the gift, but piety which secures the favor of just Heaven, is the lesson of another couplet.<sup>2</sup> Temples and statues, and all the sacred privileges attached thereto are treated with equal disregard for tradition; and the sacred institution of blood-vengeance is most emphatically condemned. For the common trust in omens given by dreams and the flight of birds he has only ridicule. So in the *Tauric Iphigenia* when Iphigenia learns from Orestes that her brother lives, she cries:

False dreams, avaunt! So then ye were but naught.<sup>3</sup>

To which Orestes answers:

Ay, and not even Gods, whom men call wise,  
Are less deceitful than be fleeting dreams.  
Utter confusion is in things divine  
And human. Wise men grieve at this alone  
When — rashness? — no, but faith in oracles  
Brings ruin — how deep, they that prove it know.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Frg.* 794.

<sup>2</sup> *Frg.* 946.

<sup>3</sup> *I.T.* 569.

<sup>4</sup> *I.T.* 570-575.

The condemnation of the interpreter of signs given by birds is made the more effective in the Phoenissae by putting it into the mouth of the seer Tiriasias:

Who useth the diviner's art  
Is foolish. If he heraldeth ill things,  
He is loathed of those to whom he prophesies.  
If pitying them that seek to him, he lie,  
He wrongs the Gods.<sup>1</sup>

In the Iphigenia at Aulis Achilles bitterly asks, "What is a seer?" and answers his own question, "A man who speaks few truths and many lies."<sup>2</sup> Even prayer is sometimes regarded as of doubtful aid, although naturally Euripides' characters often appeal to the Gods.

At times, too, the poet is more openly atheistic or agnostic with reference to the popular religion. The most striking illustration is found in the prayer which he puts into the mouth of Hecuba, the Trojan queen:

O Earth's Upbearer, thou whose throne is Earth,  
Whoe'er thou be, O past our finding out,  
Zeus, be thou Nature's Law, or Mind of Man,  
To thee I pray; for treading soundless paths,  
In justice dost thou guide all mortal things.<sup>3</sup>

You will observe that although this prayer rejects all current polytheism, it is far from denying the existence of a divine power — rather it maintains in poetic language the existence of such a principle — the reason of the universe which shows itself in nature as law and in the mind of man as reason. This pantheism finds expression elsewhere in his poetry. In illustration I will

<sup>1</sup> *Phoen.* 954-958.

<sup>2</sup> *I.A.* 956 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Tro.* 884-888.

quote two fragments. The first identifies divinity with all embracing ether:

Seest thou the boundless ether there on high,  
That folds the earth around with dewy arms?  
This deem thou Zeus, this reckon one with God.<sup>1</sup>

The second identifies god with the intelligence which pervades the world:

Thee, self-begotten, who in ether rolled  
Ceaselessly round, by mystic links dost blend  
The nature of all things, whom veils enfold  
Of light, of dark night flecked with gleams of gold,  
Of star-hosts dancing round thee without end.<sup>2</sup>

The last three passages show how the poet's mind was filled with the philosophic thought of the day. In identifying divinity with the ether he was apparently giving poetic expression to the views of his contemporary, the philosopher Diogenes of Apollonia, whom he must have known at Athens. Diogenes followed Anaximenes in making "Air" (or the "Ether") the basic element of the world, but advanced beyond his predecessor in attributing to "Air" intelligence and movement — indeed he held that it could only be conceived as intelligent; and he further said that this intelligent "Air," which was the cause and, by virtue of its intelligence, the director of all things, seemed to him to be god. In the mind of man therefore the divine principle shows itself as intellect, in nature it is law. But in Hecuba's prayer there is a higher conception of god than even this — the divine reason is also world-

<sup>1</sup> *Frsg.* 941.

<sup>2</sup> *Frsg.* 593.



ruling Justice: Justice and God are one. This identification in a sense is as old as Hesiod, but Euripides conceives of Justice not as the daughter of Zeus but as identical with the cosmic reason, immanent in all things, forming and directing all things. When the poet speaks of Justice in ways more natural to the ordinary man, he combats the current notion that Justice dwells in heaven where men's sins are recorded in a book; rather, he says, she is here on earth with men, unseen but seeing all.<sup>1</sup> Yet he never carried out this idea and reconciled it with the actual moral condition of the world and the undeserved sufferings of mankind. The problem of evil and doubt constantly vexed him; neither faith nor reason gave him rest:

When faith overfloweth my mind, God's providence all-embracing  
 Banisheth griefs: but when doubt whispereth 'Ah but to *know!*'  
 No clue through the tangle I find of fate and of life for my tracing:  
     There is ever a change and many a change,  
 And the mutable fortune of men evermore sways to and fro  
     Over limitless range.<sup>2</sup>

On death and the possibility of a future life Euripides again gives us no consistent views. He thought that men fear the great transition from inexperience with it; but he found some comfort in the fact that death comes in obedience to nature's universal law, and therefore should cause no alarm.<sup>3</sup> Still he felt that the possibility of life beyond the grave gave no certainty of joy, for many, like Macaria in the *Heraclidae*, might say:

    If in the grave aught be:  
 But ah that naught might be! — for if there too

<sup>1</sup> *Frsg.* 151, 255, 506.

<sup>2</sup> *Hippol.* 1102 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Frsg.* 757, 816.

We mortals who must die shall yet have cares,  
 I know not whither one shall turn; since death  
 For sorrow is accounted chiefest balm.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes he expresses or hints at the view that our souls return to the air or ether from which they sprang.<sup>2</sup> Again he uses the Homeric pictures of a cheerless other world. Once he refers to the Orphic doctrine in the cryptic utterance, "Who knows but life be death, and death be reckoned life below?"—verses which Plato and other philosophers were to interpret after him.

If space allowed, we might gladly dwell on Euripides' sympathy with human poverty and suffering, on the hints he gives that he perceived the common brotherhood of man. In his noble ideals of womanhood he surpasses his contemporaries. Above all these matters it is important for us with our present interest to note that more than once the tragedian seems to wish to inculcate the truth that the standard of morality among men was far superior to that of the traditional pantheon. No other poet of his age sets forth the true nobility of man so perfectly as Euripides.

The last play of the long list he wrote was the *Bacchae*. Composed in Macedonia, it was first produced at Athens after the poet's death. As was fitting for a tragedy written in the home of Dionysus, the drama deals with the Dionysiac possession, enthusiasm, the "divine madness," on which the Greeks ever set high store. No play has so baffled interpretation. Some scholars think it a recantation; others vigorously deny

<sup>1</sup> 592 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Hel.* 1014 ff.

it. Personally I am inclined to hold with Adam that Dionysus in the play "stands for the spirit of enthusiasm in the ancient Greek meaning of the word," and that the principal lesson of the drama is to be found in the verse, "Not with knowledge is wisdom bought" <sup>1</sup> — that is, reason is not all in man, but there is something greater — enthusiasm, inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

From what we have been considering thus far, it is evident that Euripides' spirit was primarily iconoclastic; there can be no question that he contributed to the decay of the ancient beliefs and that he helped drive the Olympians from their thrones in the minds of thinking men. For fifty years he openly uttered his criticisms in the theater at the high festival of Dionysus before the quick-witted Athenians. The effect must have been great, for no poet enjoyed more widespread popularity.

On the positive side Euripides offers no system of religion or of morals. Indeed, he seems never to have arrived at any complete unity in his thought. But he is stimulating now, and in his own day unquestionably goaded men to reflection, just because he raises so often fundamental questions — the questions which reflecting men were asking then and have been asking ever since — questions which are never wholly answered, but which always demand an answer. The stimulating character of his dramas makes him indeed one of the great religious poets of the world.

<sup>1</sup> 395.

<sup>2</sup> Adam, *Religious Teachers*, p. 316.

## V

### PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

**S**OCRATES became the father of many philosophic schools. His pupils naturally differed from one another in the emphasis which they gave to this or that side of their master's teaching and in the ways in which they combined his doctrines with principles laid down by earlier thinkers, but all agreed in this, that they directed their attention to man as the center of thought and inquiry. From this time ethics and religion became the dominant themes of philosophy. Our subject bids us confine our attention to the greatest of these pupils, Plato.

Plato was born at Athens in the year 428/7 B.C. of an ancient family, which was related to the law-giver Solon. After being educated in the best Athenian fashion, he attached himself to Socrates in his twentieth year, when the latter was already about sixty years old, and he continued to associate with his master for ten years until the latter's condemnation and death. Probably he was not one of the inner circle, but he tells us that he was present at his master's trial and with other followers of Socrates was prepared to go bondsman, if a fine were inflicted. Sickness prevented him from sharing in the discussion of the last day, which is related to us in the *Phaedo*. After Socrates' death, Plato was

absent from Athens for about twelve years, residing first in the neighboring city of Megara, where his association with Euclides, one of Socrates' oldest pupils, must have contributed to the development of his own philosophy. Later in southern Italy, if we accept the traditional account of his travels, he had an opportunity to study more closely in their home the Orphic-Pythagorean systems and doctrines, many of which no doubt he had often heard Socrates discuss. At Syracuse in Sicily he won over Dion, the young brother-in-law of the tyrant Dionysius. The latter, however, found his moral teachings offensive, seized him, and had him offered for sale as a prisoner of war in the slave market at Aegina. But a friend, Anniceris, bought him and set him free. When Plato's other friends wished to repay to Anniceris the money he had spent, the latter refused, and the sum was used to purchase a grove sacred to the hero Academus, in which Plato opened a philosophic school. There, save for the interruptions caused by two journeys to Sicily, he continued to teach for about forty years, dying in 347 B.C. at the age of eighty.

To this school came pupils from almost every part of the Greek world. The chief subjects studied were the various branches of mathematics — including of course astronomy and harmonics, — and dialectics, by which is meant “the art of question and answer, the art of giving a rational account of things and of receiving such an account from others.” The distinctive methods employed were those of analysis and division which Plato seems to have developed so far that the invention of the



former was actually, but erroneously, attributed to him. The purpose of analysis was to secure an explanation or proof of a proposition; that of division was to arrive at a proper classification or division of the object under consideration. Plato's instruction was evidently given in considerable part by lectures, of which his hearers took notes; there was also scientific research on the part of the pupils who worked out the problems or difficulties set them by their master. Nor were these researches wholly mathematical and astronomical, for there is good reason to believe that studies in natural history were also pursued. Indeed, Aristotle, for twenty years a member of the Academy, must have had opportunities here to carry on those researches which interested him most in the early part of his life. But whatever the studies, the purpose was to lead the pupils to the discovery and contemplation of Reality, of Being, of the fundamental and permanent as against the individual and transitory phenomenon. Of Plato's lectures we know virtually nothing; his Dialogues represent those parts of his doctrine which he wished to give to the outside world; it is probable that they in no sense adequately reproduce his teachings to his disciples.

How much of his philosophy Plato received from his master Socrates, how much he developed for himself cannot now be determined. Socrates left no writings; we know him only from the writings of others, and above all from the dialogues of Plato. There he is the chief spokesman, who leads his associates along various paths toward truth; and certainly no pupil ever built a nobler

monument to his teacher than Plato did. Among modern scholars there are many views as to the extent of Plato's debt to his master: one extreme wing, which has many adherents, would limit the Socratic elements in the Platonic doctrine to the ethical interest, the search for universals, and the dialectic method; the other wing, of which the eminent English Platonist Burnet is the chief representative, would attribute to Socrates practically everything found in the dialogues which Plato wrote before he began his teaching in the Academy. Indeed Burnet holds that Plato's chief purpose in the earlier dialogues was to set forth the life and teaching of Socrates; he therefore claims that the "doctrine of ideas," with all its consequences, and much besides, are purely Socratic, taken over by Plato in developed form. Few of us can accept either of these extreme views; it seems more probable that the truth lies between, that Plato learned much relating to "ideas" and their Pythagorean origins from his teacher, just as he derived from him his ethical interest and his method. But to reduce the brilliant pupil to a mere reporter of his master's views with little philosophy of his own until he was past forty, is quite incredible, and such a procedure has no proper warrant. When speaking of Socrates in my previous lecture I avoided this question, for a discussion of it there would have been unprofitable and confusing; and even now for convenience I propose to treat that part of Plato's philosophy which immediately concerns us as if it were wholly his own, begging you, however, to keep in mind always that un-

doubtedly much in germ or developed form was derived directly from Plato's chief teacher. Furthermore I must ask you to remember that Plato had been given to poetry when a youth, and that although he renounced the practice of the art, he remained a poet in spirit to the end of his life; all his thoughts were touched with poetry, enlivened with humour, and fired with religious zeal. He was a consummate literary artist, and a man of many sides. It was natural therefore that he should nowhere set forth a crystallized system of philosophy such as a less imaginative and duller person might have done; he was apparently a man who grew through all his eighty years. The result is that in spite of the fact that we may properly speak of "the unity of Plato's thought," we find in his works variety, variation, and even contradiction. The requirements of our present situation, however, force us to consider our themes categorically, though that procedure is somewhat unfair to Plato.

Let us then first examine the central thought of Plato's philosophy—the "doctrine of ideas." Developing the doctrines of earlier philosophers, especially those of Heraclitus and Anaxagoras, Plato held that the world is dual. In it is the phenomenal world visible to us, which includes all natural objects and those made by man, a transient and unreal world which we know only through our senses. But beside it, or rather behind it, is another world invisible but permanent and real, which can be grasped only by the reason. This is the world of ideas. Yet the two worlds are not separate,

for the world of the senses owes its existence wholly to its dependence on the world of ideas. To understand Plato's view we must consider in an elementary way what he meant by "ideas." The words which he uses (*εἶδος*, *ιδέα*) signify "form," and in logic are used in the sense of "class," "kind," "species," "the general principle for the classification of objects." The translation "idea" is traditional, and there is no adequate reason for preferring "form" or any other English equivalent. Now Plato's statement that the world of phenomena depends on the invisible world of ideas seems at first sight paradoxical, for by it he means that the individual tree, book, desk, chair, good man, or whatever you please, is not the real being at all, but that the ideas of tree, book, desk, chair, and goodness alone possess reality. It may be made plain by an illustration which shall be Plato's own. At the beginning of the tenth book of the Republic Socrates and Glaucon are conversing together. The master wins Glaucon's assent first to the proposition that although there are many beds and tables in the world, there are only two ideas, one of a bed, the other of a table. He then goes on to show that the workman makes a bed or table by shaping his material according to the idea of a bed or a table, but that he does not create the ideas themselves. That is done by God who is the real maker of the real bed, that is, of the idea of a bed. The carpenter makes only the particular bed which owes its temporary existence to the eternal idea — the real bed — which is in Nature, in the mind of God. Or if Plato should appear



before us tonight, he might say, "Suppose we take a dozen books of different sizes and different shapes and appearance, how do we recognize that these diverse objects are all books?" Then when we hesitated to give an answer, as we probably should, he would reply, "It is because each one of these individual books partakes of the idea of book. The idea is present in the individual example and thereby gives the individual its existence; the individual depends therefore on the idea, not the idea on the individual. If this dozen, or indeed if all the books in the entire world were to be destroyed, the idea of book would still remain, and new books could be made by causing the materials out of which books are constructed to partake of the idea of book. That is, all individual books are transitory, impermanent, unreal; the idea of book is permanent, eternal, it alone has reality; and all individual things, therefore, exist, so far as they have any real existence, only by partaking of the ideas. So all things come into being and owe their existence to sharing in the eternal ideas."

We should be unjust to Plato if we thought that he regarded this doctrine as a perfect explanation of the relation between the visible and invisible worlds. Far from holding such a view he himself evidently held it to be a "guess at truth," which served to show in its way that there is a permanent reality behind the phenomena of the visible world and a truth which is beyond sense. Indeed Plato is very conscious of troublesome questions which arise in connection with the doctrine, and in three dialogues — his *Philebus*, *Parmenides*, and *Sophist* —



he endeavors to meet some of these questions, and there he offers admirable criticism of his own views.

With reference to the source of the doctrine, as I have said above, we cannot tell how much Plato derived from Socrates or how much he developed for himself. Socrates was evidently always searching for universals, trying to determine what goodness is in itself in contrast to the goodness embodied in a good man, what are virtue, courage, and such qualities. The teacher or the pupil may have extended the ideas, the universals, to include all things, even the humble articles of furniture which are the examples in the Republic. But in any case by this doctrine of "ideas," "forms," Plato secured a basis for reality, a means of attaining absolute knowledge in contrast to that relative knowledge, which according to the Sophists was the utmost which man could attain. Plato would have quite agreed with Protagoras that if the senses were our only avenues to knowledge, then indeed man would be the measure of all things and his knowledge would be limited to the transient phenomenal world; that is, he could have no knowledge of reality; but by apprehending through our reason the ideas — that is, the realities — on which the phenomenal world depends, we can gain genuine knowledge and free ourselves from subjection to mere opinion.

Plato also teaches that there are various grades of ideas, some being subordinate to others; the highest of all is that of the Good, identified by him with the Beautiful. This supreme idea is at once the cause of all existence and knowledge, and comprehends within

itself all other ideas; as the sun in the visible world, so in the world of true knowledge the Good "is the universal author of all things right and beautiful, itself the source of truth and intelligence." It is the Absolute, the universal Reason, God.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that Plato sets the world of ideas apprehended by reason over against the world of phenomena, known to us through our senses. The latter world is material, the former immaterial. This concept of the immateriality of ideas was something new in philosophy. Anaxagoras had thought his formative principle (Νόος), as his predecessors had thought theirs, to be as material as the "seeds" out of which all things were made; but Plato developed an immaterial, an ideal world, wherein are found all cause and all reality.

Now the Platonic ideas are apprehended by the human intellect. What are the consequences of this fact? It must follow that man's reason has a nature similar to that of the ideas; like them it must belong to the world which is above the senses; and with them it must partake of the Absolute. But Plato shows that the ideas are eternal and immortal, and draws therefrom the logical conclusion that man's intellect, his reasoning soul, likewise knows no creation and is free from death.

However he is not content to let the matter rest on this argument alone, but he supports the doctrine of immortality by many proofs, as in the *Phaedrus* where

<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes said that Plato does not identify the Idea of the Good with God, but I cannot interpret the following passages save as I have done above: *Phil.* 22 C; *Tim.* 28 A-29 E; 37 A; 92 C.

Socrates explains: "The soul through all her being is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal; but that which moves another and is moved by another, in ceasing to move, ceases also to live. Only the self-moving, as it never leaves itself, never ceases to move and is the fountain and beginning of motion to all that moves besides."<sup>1</sup> In the *Phaedo*<sup>2</sup> he represents Socrates as offering a number of different arguments to his questioning friends. One of these is that by which he first proves that souls exist before they are domiciled in our bodies, for recollection implies a previous existence, and since men can recall and recognize things which they have never seen or been taught in their present existence, it follows that they have been born with this knowledge, so that what we call learning is after all only a recollection of ideas gained in a previous existence. Socrates concludes his argument with the question: "Then may we not say, Simmias, that if, as we are always repeating, there is an absolute beauty, and goodness, and an absolute essence of all things; and if to this, which is now discovered to have existed in our former state, we refer all our sensations, and with this compare them, finding these ideas to be pre-existent and our inborn possession — then our souls must have had a prior existence, but if not, there would be no force in the argument?" To this his hearers give ready assent. In the *Meno* this same argument is very adroitly drawn from the realm of mathematics.<sup>3</sup> An untutored slave is

<sup>1</sup> *Phaedrus*, 245; cf. *Laws*, 10, 894 B ff., 12, 966 E.

<sup>2</sup> *Phaedo*, 72 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Meno*, 81 ff.

made to "recollect" that the square of the hypotenuse of an isosceles right-angled triangle is equal to twice the square of one of its sides. This is the doctrine of recollection to which Wordsworth has given beautiful expression in his familiar lines:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.

But as Simmias and Cebes in the *Phaedo* point out, this doctrine only shows that the soul existed before the body; it does not prove that the soul is immortal. Socrates therefore goes on to prove this further point, largely by showing the simple and unchanging nature of the soul which is like that of the ideas, and he therefore concludes that since it cannot admit of change, it must be free from death. Again he argues that since the soul can rule and use the body as it will, it must be anterior to the body and hence have an eternal and never ending existence.<sup>1</sup> The final and apparently most convincing proof to Plato's mind, in spite of its dialectic character, is that the notion of life cannot be separated from the soul, for the soul is that which gives life; therefore since a dead soul is an impossibility, we must agree that the soul is immortal.<sup>2</sup> To follow out in detail the other arguments would occupy too much time now, interest-

<sup>1</sup> *Phaedo*, 86 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Phaedo*, 105.

ing as it might prove. Indeed if we were to rehearse all of Plato's proofs of the immortality of the soul, we should run through practically the entire gamut of the arguments that have ever been offered. His frequent return to the subject indicates the importance which he gave to the belief.

Before we approach Plato's ethical and religious views we must glance for a moment at his psychology, for on that depends in no small measure his moral system. In the fourth book of the *Republic* when discussing the different forms of government, Socrates is made to show that the soul has three parts or elements: the first is the divine or rational part (*τὸ θεῖον, τὸ λογιστικόν*) whose seat is in the head, the second, the courageous or passionate element (*τὸ θυμοειδές*) residing in the heart, and the third is the appetite (*τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν*) which belongs to the diaphragm or liver.<sup>1</sup> In the *Phaedrus*<sup>2</sup> this same division is set forth in a myth. Now when in an individual all three parts are in accord under the leadership of reason, whose orders are enforced by courage on appetite, the man is virtuous; but if appetite and courage unite against reason, discord results and the man is vicious. As the state is well ordered when harmony exists among its parts, so harmony of the soul, led by the reason, produces the virtuous human being. In the earlier dialogues the soul is evidently regarded as a unit, so that the parts are really forms or manifestations

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.* IV, 427 ff., esp. 440 E-441 A; VI, 504; VIII, 550; IX, 580-581; cf. *Timaeus*, 69-72.

<sup>2</sup> 246 f.



of the soul; all three are immortal. But in the *Timaeus* only the reason is immortal, the other parts being separable and bound to the body with which they die.<sup>1</sup> Now we have already seen that the soul, or at least its rational part, being divine and immortal, has an affinity for the eternal ideas and is endowed by a natural love for the true, the beautiful, and the good. It is therefore impelled toward the divine world of ideas by a natural passion, and this effort on the part of man's reason is philosophy. The true philosopher then is the lover of truth and reality, who is absorbed in the pleasures of the soul so that he will hardly be conscious of bodily pleasure; indeed he will not think much of human life or even fear death.<sup>2</sup> The soul, however, in its effort to mount into the realm of the ideas, is held back by the body in which it is imprisoned and fettered in the world of the senses. Thus we find in Plato the Orphic belief that man has a dual nature, made up of a divine soul and a mortal hindering body. We shall presently see how he gave to the emotional belief of that sect a philosophic basis and so transformed it into a reasonable article of morality and religion.

Now we may consider Plato's moral and religious views. The highest good for man, according to his teaching, is likeness to God — that is, the largest possible participation in the ideas of the Good which are in the Absolute. In direct proportion to the success of the rational soul in appropriating to itself these ideas, the man will practise justice and holiness, that is, be right-

<sup>1</sup> 69 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Rep.* VI, 484 ff.

eous; but inasmuch as the world of ideas cannot be apprehended by the senses, the rational soul of the philosopher must always try to escape from the world of the senses where evils dwell. As Socrates in the *Theaetetus*<sup>1</sup> assures Theodorus: "Evils, Theodorus, can never pass away; for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to the good. Having no place among the gods in heaven, of necessity they hover around the mortal nature and this earthly sphere. Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, so far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise . . . God is never in any way unrighteous — he is perfect righteousness; and he of us who is the most righteous is most like him. . . . To know this is true wisdom and virtue; and ignorance of this is manifest folly and vice." The man, then, whose soul strives to become like God will inevitably be righteous. Plato's philosophy thus results in practical morality.

Furthermore we are assured in the *Republic* that a seeker after righteousness will not be neglected by the gods, for Socrates there says:<sup>2</sup> "Then this must be our notion of the just man, that even when he is in poverty or sickness or any other seeming misfortune, all things will in the end work together for good to him in life and death: for the gods have a care of any one whose desire is to become just and be like God, so far as man can attain the divine likeness, by the pursuit of virtue."

<sup>1</sup> *Theaet.* 176.

<sup>2</sup> *X*, 613.

The path by which man is to attain to likeness of God, and so to freedom from his lower nature, is that of a noble asceticism which Socrates described to Simmias and Cebes the night before his own death:<sup>1</sup> "No one who has not studied philosophy and who is not entirely pure at the time of his departure is allowed to enter the company of the gods, but the lover of knowledge only. And this is the reason, Simmias and Cebes, why the true votaries of philosophy abstain from all fleshly lusts, and hold out against them and refuse to give themselves up to them, not because they fear poverty or the ruin of their families, like the lovers of money and the world in general; nor like the lovers of power and honour, because they dread the dishonour or the disgrace of evil deeds."

"No, Socrates, that would not become them," said Cebes.

"No indeed," he replied, "and therefore they who have any care of their own souls, and do not merely live moulding and fashioning the body, say farewell to all this; they will not walk in the ways of the blind: and when philosophy offers them purification and release from evil, they feel that they ought not to resist her influence, and whither she leads they turn and follow."

"What do you mean, Socrates?"

"I will tell you," he said. "The lovers of knowledge are conscious that the soul was simply fastened and glued to the body — until philosophy freed her, she could only view real existence through the bars of a

<sup>1</sup> *Phaedo*, 82 f.

prison, not in and through herself; she was wallowing in the mire of every sort of ignorance, and by reason of lust had become the principal accomplice in her own captivity." And a little later Socrates says: "The soul of the true philosopher thinks that she ought not to resist this deliverance (which philosophy offers), and therefore abstains from pleasures and desires and pains and fears, so far as she is able."

Somewhat earlier in the dialogue Socrates had stated in still more emphatic terms the necessity of putting the body aside if man's soul would attain real knowledge:<sup>1</sup> "For if while in company with the body the soul cannot have pure knowledge, one of two things follows — either knowledge is not to be attained at all, or if at all, after death. For then, and not till then, the soul will be parted from the body and exist in herself alone. In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body, and are not surfeited with the bodily nature, but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. And thus having got rid of the foolishness of the body we shall be pure and shall hold converse with the pure, and know of ourselves the clear light everywhere, which is no other than the light of truth." As the phrase, "until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us," shows, man might not hasten the time of his release by his own act. And in other places, in familiar ways, Plato teaches that man may not desert

<sup>1</sup> *Phædo*, 66 E ff.



the station where god has set him on guard until the command is given.

Finally in the *Cratylus*,<sup>1</sup> where Socrates in discussing the origin and nature of language indulges in some serious fooling in connection with the name of the soul (*ψυχή*), he says that he imagines that those who first gave the soul its name "psyche," (*ψυχή*), wished to express the truth that the soul when in the body is the source of life, and gives the body the ability to breathe and revive, and that when this power fails the body, then it perishes and dies. As for body, he reminds his interlocutor that that word (*σῶμα*) is variously interpreted, some saying that it is the grave (*σῆμα*) of the soul, which may be regarded as in a tomb during this present life; and he adds that the Orphic poets were probably the ones who invented the name, for they had the notion that the embodied soul is suffering punishment for sin, and that the body is a prison in which the soul is incarcerated until the penalty of sin is paid. Likewise in the *Gorgias*<sup>2</sup> Socrates refers to the same Orphic idea and quotes a verse from Euripides: "Who knows whether life be not death and death life?" That is, this death in life is due to the body which tends to strangle the soul. Only when the reasoning soul has escaped from this tomb of the flesh can it really live. This is the reason why the true philosopher is always pursuing death in the sense that he is trying to free his soul, so far as may be, from the concerns of the body that it may enjoy life at its best.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 399 f.

<sup>2</sup> 492 E-493 A.

<sup>3</sup> *Phaedo*, 63 ff.



I have used Plato's own words thus extensively for they set forth more eloquently than any words of mine the essential features of his doctrine. It requires no argument to show how great his debt to the Orphics and Pythagoreans was. But we cannot fail to see that he went far beyond his predecessors, for to their emotional belief in the immortality of the soul he gave an intellectual basis, by showing that the rational soul is of the same nature and substance as the Absolute, and therefore immortal and ever striving to apprehend the Absolute to which it belongs. In place of the external purifications and simple taboos which made up the Orphic course of life, Plato substitutes a noble discipline, reminding us of St. Paul — a discipline which has for its aim nothing less than the likening of man's soul to God. When Plato teaches that man must begin his immortality here "by the practice of death," we now see that he really means the practice of life; for life can only begin when the soul is released from its bodily tomb.

From the Orphics and Pythagoreans Plato adopted also the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. According to his view a thousand years — ten times the longest span of human life — elapsed between death and rebirth, during which the wicked received their ten-fold punishment and the righteous their like reward. When the time to return on earth came around, the souls were allowed to choose their new life as they pleased, only the wicked souls, "which had never seen the truth," could not pass into the bodies of men. The choice made and

their next destiny determined, the souls passed to the plain of Forgetfulness where each must drink of the river of Lethe; in the darkness of midnight there was an earthquake and thunderstorm, and the souls were driven, like shooting stars, to their birth. Ten thousand years were required to complete the round of rebirths and to allow the soul to return to its heavenly home. But the soul of a philosopher, "guileless and true," might secure release after three rebirths if each time he had chosen the higher life. Some incurable sinners were not allowed to return to earth, but when their souls approached the mouth of the cavern which led to the upper world, the mouth gave a mighty roar and drove them back, while fiends tortured them with all the sufferings which a fertile imagination could devise. The path of salvation therefore lay in following righteousness and justice, in choosing the good, that is, in true philosophy. At the close of the Republic Socrates relates the vision of Er the Pamphylian whose soul returned with a report of the other world, and so concludes: "And thus, Glaucon, the tale has been saved and has not perished, and will save us if we are obedient to the word spoken; and we shall pass safely over the river of Forgetfulness and our soul will not be defiled. Wherefore my counsel is, that we hold fast ever to the heavenly way and follow after justice and virtue always, considering that the soul is immortal and able to endure every sort of good and every sort of evil. Thus shall we live dear to one another and to the gods, both while remaining here and when, like conquerors in the games who go round to

gather gifts, we receive our reward. And it shall be well with us both in this life and in the pilgrimage of a thousand years which we have been describing.”<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the ultimate fate of the soul Plato is not wholly clear; but apparently he held that with the exception of those who had done unpardonable wrongs the souls of men, when their wanderings and rebirths were over and they had attained to purity, returned to God, to the universal reason; probably, however, he thought of their return as being without loss of individuality, for Plato lays so much stress on the individual soul that we cannot believe that he would have allowed it to lose its personality in the Absolute.

This account, I trust, for all its imperfections, is sufficient to indicate what a great advance Plato made in his concept of the spiritual life. Man's reason is now made the means and agent of his spiritual ascent; the reasoning soul, by its own nature, strives to seek its own, and so finds its goal by virtue of its reason. The human will is not neglected in the Platonic system, but it is by no means made prominent. Man's salvation is attained when the soul through the exercise of its reason has risen superior to its bodily prison, freed itself of the imperfections and evils which are necessarily associated with the body, and purified has attained to God's likeness.

In the preceding discussion I have used the word God freely, but it may fairly be asked how far such use is justified, and furthermore whether Plato was a pantheist

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.* X, 614 ff.; cf. *Phaedrus*, 248 f.

or a polytheist. It is indeed somewhat difficult to answer these questions, for in many passages he speaks of the gods in the plural after the common manner, and in the *Timaeus* he especially provides for a multitude of gods secondary to the Absolute; in many other places he speaks of the Divine (*τὸ θεῖον*) or simply God (*θεός*). Sometimes he seems to conceive of God as a living personality; again God is apparently only the impersonal idea of the Good. Yet in spite of the fact that his expressions range from polytheism almost to monotheism, considering the sum total of his thought, we are justified in speaking of his idea of God. At the same time we must always understand that his thought admitted many gods, subordinate to the Absolute and included in it.

But whatever the form of expression that he uses, Plato conceives of God as the giver of good alone. For him there is no deception or deceit in the divine; the chastening of man by God is always for the purpose of making man better, never to satisfy any punitive desire. The notion of "the envy of the gods," which is so prominent in Aeschylus, Herodotus, and other writers of the fifth century, to Plato is abhorrent and inconceivable. Furthermore he makes the Divine, the idea of the Good, the measure of truth, not man, as Protagoras would have had him. His world therefore has a divine warrant of its validity; it is ordered by the mind of the good and just God, and not by the will of a debased divinity or by mere chance. Previous thinkers had made Justice the highest attribute of divinity; to this Plato added Goodness as the chief characteristic of God.



But in this discussion of Plato's religious philosophy we have left one important subject untouched — the problem of evil. This was a question which a mind so acute and inquisitive as Plato's could not finally avoid. Of the presence of evil in the world he was fully aware, and indeed he maintained that evils must always exist, for there must remain something antagonistic to the good; and since evils cannot exist in heaven the earth is their abode, from which man must try to escape.<sup>1</sup> On the source of evil, however, he touches only in the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus*;<sup>2</sup> in both the question is intimately connected with his theories of creation, which he sets forth in myth. But leaving aside the Platonic imagery, I will simply remind you that earlier in this lecture we saw that Plato conceived the world we know as dual — the phenomenal world known through the senses and the world of ideas apprehended by reason. Now the ideas alone have Being; but the phenomenal world is always in a state of Becoming, that is, of coming into being and of ceasing to be; it is both temporal and imperfect. Obviously there must be some principle, parallel in a way to the perfect and eternal ideas, such that it can receive them, and by its participation in them bring the imperfect sensible world into transitory existence. This principle is to Plato the material element. Now since he ascribes to the ideas alone real existence, that is, Being, the material principle must be Not-being. It is the negative substratum of all sensible phenomena, itself invisible, without form or character-

<sup>1</sup> *Theaet.* 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Statesman* 272 ff.; *Tim.* 42 ff.



istic, or in Plato's words "the receptacle, and in a manner, the nurse of all generation"; for, although itself formless, it is capable of taking on all the forms that the ideas may impose upon it. Plato himself could not avoid the difficulties which such a material substratum raises, and at times he is forced to speak as if it were something real in itself, having an existence beside the ideas. But his true notion seems to be that matter is mere negation, like the Aristotelian *στέρησις*, something which cannot be grasped by the intellect, as can the ideas, or perceived by the senses, as can the phenomenal world; it is identical with space. Of course when Plato talks about this negative principle, he inevitably speaks as if we could know something about it.<sup>1</sup>

The Absolute in Plato's thought had not only life and intelligence but also creative activities; and the acts of creation consisted in imposing on the formless material principle the ideas which the Absolute comprehends in itself, or, as perhaps he would have preferred to say, in making the material principle partake of the appropriate idea. In the *Cratylus* he illustrates the relation of matter to the idea by the way in which the artisan makes a shuttle out of wood, always forming his material with reference to the true or ideal shuttle.<sup>2</sup> We may illustrate further by examples modelled on Plato's own. Think for a moment of the potter and his clay. The clay is formless matter which the potter takes and places on the wheel, and there imposes upon the clay the idea of

<sup>1</sup> *Tim.* 49 E-52 B; cf. *Aristot. Phys.* 1, 9, 192 a, 3 ff.; 4, 2, 209 b, 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Crat.* 389 f.

the pot which is in his own mind; so the pot acquires a real existence in so far as it partakes of or embodies the idea which exists in the potter's mind. Or we may think of the sculptor and the shapeless block of marble. By imposing his idea upon the marble, by making the shapeless block embody his idea, the sculptor brings the statue into being. These illustrations, both Plato's and my own, are of course misleading, for the wood, clay, and marble from which the several objects are made are far from being the negative substance which Plato would have us believe his material principle to be. But they may serve to suggest the way in which he conceived the varied world about us to come into its temporary existence.

Now to Plato's mind the Absolute and the ideas are perfect; yet we know that the phenomenal world is imperfect, and imperfection is evil; therefore, he says, evil must be found in the negative substratum, since as we have already seen, this was regarded by him as in every way the opposite of the perfect ideas. This imperfection, inherent in the material principle, is the "necessity" of which he speaks in the *Theaetetus* as causing evils — the opposite of the good.<sup>1</sup> Evil, therefore, is eternal, but, as we have earlier learned, the individual may escape, if he will take the deliverance which philosophy offers him.

As I have said, the course of creation is explained through myth in the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman*.<sup>2</sup> In the former God is represented as creating first the gods

<sup>1</sup> *Theaet.* 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Tim.* 29 E ff.; *Statesman*, 272 B ff.

of heaven which are the fixed stars and planets, from whom sprang the gods of popular mythology. The Creator had already conceived of creatures of the air, sea, and land; but these he did not himself create, for then they would have been on equality with the gods; he rather commissioned the gods to create man and the lower animals, while he furnished the divine part, the soul. Man's soul therefore is of the same nature as the universal soul, but his body is material, made of the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water, and it is imperfect, being subject to the passions. In the Statesman Plato sets forth his theory of the development of man from an earlier stage to the present: the significant thing for us at the moment is his explanation of man's falling away from virtue as due to the admixture of matter in him, that this fall was "inherent in the primal nature which was full of disorder."

This, then, will at least suggest Plato's view as to the origin of evil in the world. His language is that of myth, and it seems evident that he did not formulate his explanation perfectly even in his own mind. We shall best regard it as one of his guesses at truth. It is, of course, easy to find weaknesses in his thought on this question and to show that the explanation which he suggests is not satisfactory. But we shall do better to remember the difficulty of the problem and to recognize the value of his attempt to reach its solution.

The greatest service, however, which Plato did was to establish by means of his doctrine of ideas a rational relation between the invisible world of reason and the

visible world of the senses; and by pointing out that the rational part of man's soul is of the same substance as the ideas and therefore of the same substance as the Absolute, to give an intellectual basis to the doctrine of a natural striving on the part of man after the supreme Good. Hardly second to this was his service in the field of ethics, where he showed that man's spiritual advance depends upon the constant curbing of the passions and the body. The greatness of his genius is shown by the fact that throughout antiquity the highest religious thought of paganism had its source in his work and was only a development of it. Before we have finished these lectures we shall gain some hints of his profound influence on Christianity.

Platonic philosophy by attributing to the ideas an existence apart from things, and conversely by denying all existence to anything but the ideas, had removed all reality to the supernatural world. It was inevitable that this view should be promptly attacked. The challenge came from Plato's greatest pupil, Aristotle.

Aristotle, born at Stagira in Thrace about 384 B.C., by inheritance and early training had a strong bent toward natural science, since he was descended from a line of physicians who, according to Galen, taught anatomy by dissection. For twenty years he was the pupil and assistant of Plato in the Academy. After the death of his master he went to the court of Hermias, a prince of Mysia, and in 343 he was appointed tutor to the son of King Philip of Macedon, Alexander, then thirteen years



of age. About 335 he opened a school in the Lyceum at Athens, where he taught for some thirteen years. Then, being accused of impiety after Alexander's death, he withdrew to Chalcis in Euboea, as he said, that the Athenians might not sin a second time against philosophy; there he died about 322.

Into Aristotle's encyclopedic knowledge and enormous scientific activities we may not now go; and indeed we need not dwell at very great length upon him, for his influence in religion was less potent than Plato's through antiquity and the earlier Middle Ages. The chief cause of the elder philosopher's greater influence is to be found in the fact that Plato's thought centered on man, his morality, and his relation to God, while Aristotle was concerned primarily with the universe of which man was to him only a part; to Plato virtue was inseparably connected with religion, and was therefore something to be sought with fervent spirit as well as with cool reason; to Aristotle virtue was rather an intellectual matter, an even balance of the soul, that natural perfection of the whole organism on which the well-being and happiness of man depended — a state which was to be attained by right calculation, choice, and habit. So it came to pass that although Aristotle's works on logic were continuously studied in one form or another, his great sway in many realms of human thought, including theology, began in the thirteenth century, when, learning first from Arabic scholars, later aided and stimulated by the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, the western intellectual world eagerly studied his works anew. Then



Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Roger Bacon raised him to the supreme position in philosophy and theology, so that he became for that age indeed "the master of those who know."

Let us now consider some parts of his philosophy. He criticized Plato's doctrine that ideas have an existence apart from things, and not unjustly charged that Plato had taken the universals, which we arrive at by abstraction, and had elevated these general concepts into eternal and immortal elements, claiming for them that they were anterior to the things of sense and alone had real existence. In his own philosophy he took a position fundamentally opposed to that of Plato, for he insisted that "ideas," "forms" and the phenomenal world could not exist apart, for if they did, then we should be obliged to postulate a third world beyond them; that is to say, that if the idea of man, for example, had a substantial existence apart from individual men, then there would have to be an idea antecedent to both the idea of man and the individual men, the model of both, and this idea would be a "third man." He further pointed out that men know the ideas only in the concrete objects, never apart from those objects of which they are the ideas, that the essence can never be separated from that of which it is the essence, since then both thing and essence would cease to exist. So he charged Plato with using meaningless poetic metaphors when he said that ideas, forms, existed apart from things. Reality to Aristotle was always in the individual object, itself an indissoluble union of matter and form. Of course he

recognized that the human mind could abstract these two elements each from the other and could think of the matter and the form as separate, but he would not allow that these abstractions had substantial reality in the sense that they could ever exist by themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Since then to him the Platonic ideas were nothing apart from the individual objects, Aristotle could find no principle of movement or change in them; so he claimed that the doctrine of ideas was sterile and came to naught. In his own system he enumerated four principles or causes, which he insisted, however, are only known to us from individual things: the material cause (τὸ ἐξ οὗ γίνεταί τι, ἡ ὕλη), the formal cause (τὸ εἶδος, ἡ μορφή), the efficient cause (τὸ ὄθεν ἡ ἀρχή), and the final cause (τὸ οὗ ἐνεκα, τὸ τέλος). To make his meaning clear let us use in part his own illustrations: the material cause of the statue is the bronze of which it is made, just as in the example of the pot which we used a little while ago, the clay was its material cause; the formal cause is the idea of the statue, or of the pot, or of the octave in music, which the artist has in mind; the artist himself is the efficient cause; and the object of the action, the completed pot, statue, or whatever it may be, is the final cause.<sup>2</sup> That is to say the statue exists potentially in the bronze, the pot potentially in the clay, the octave potentially in the musical sounds, but these things can be called in actual existence only by the

<sup>1</sup> *Met.* I, 9, 990 b ff.; VI, 8; XII, 10; XIII, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Phys.* II, 3, 194 b, 16 ff.; cf. *Met.* I, 3, 983 a, 24 ff.; VI, 7, 1032 a, 13 ff.; VII, 4, 1044 a, 32 ff.; *et passim*.

operation of the other three causes; and the same thing holds true in animate nature. It is possible therefore to state the matter generally and to say that in every case the individual is produced by the operation of the formal, efficient, and final causes on the material cause, bringing to actuality the potentiality in matter. Of course we may regard the formal, efficient, and final causes as different aspects of the same formal cause — a thing which Aristotle himself does in more than one passage,<sup>1</sup> so that in the last analysis he regards matter and form as the two causes or principles of things. These two are to him correlatives, each completing the other, although he gives greater importance to the formal than to the material cause. These two causes, he says, attract each other; and their union brings about movement, which is always the evolution of something from something else.

From these considerations I trust that it is evident that Aristotle regarded every object of nature, whether animate or inanimate, as the product of causation; behind each individual he found another individual, and he saw that each object was the result of conscious causal activity. So, looking on the world with scientific eyes, he found therein continuous movement dependent on a chain of causes, and he pointed out that such a chain requires a first cause which must be the source of all activity. This first cause was to him Mind, pure Thought, God, conscious, eternal, and good. But his First Cause was at the same time the Final Cause, for

<sup>1</sup> E. g. *Phys.* II, 7, 198 a, 22 ff.

the supreme Mind conceives the end toward which all creative activity is tending, that is, it acts with intelligence so that the world is the creation of intelligence and is directed toward wise ends.<sup>1</sup> The order of the universe bears witness to the Mind which set it in order, and which keeps it in motion, all for intelligent ends; for to use Aristotle's own expression, "God and Nature do nothing without a purpose."<sup>2</sup> Thus Aristotle introduced into theology cosmological and teleological arguments for the existence of God.

But when Aristotle defines God as pure Thought, the supreme Idea or Form, with no admixture of matter, it might seem that he had contradicted himself. It will be remembered, however, that in his system matter and form do not stand quite on an equality — matter is somewhat subordinate to form. He regarded matter as the point of departure for something higher — the clay being antecedent and lower than the pot, the bronze than the statue — for the higher product always results from the operation of the formal cause on the material. Of course in our illustrations the bronze and the clay are not absolute matter, but only matter with reference to the higher products evolved from them — the pot and the statue. Indeed Aristotle did not suppose that there was such a thing as absolute matter existing by itself, but he rather thought of his material cause as matter not yet formed, the germ from which the actual object was to be developed by the operation of the formal

<sup>1</sup> *Phys.* VIII, 6, 258 b, 10 ff.; *Met.* XI, 7 (entire).

<sup>2</sup> *De caelo*, I, 4, 271 a, 33.

cause. Thus he saw in the universe an ascending scale of existence, just as today we recognize such a scale in the animal world, each stage being more perfect than that below it; he pointed out that with reference to the lower, each higher stage was ideal, but material with reference to that which was still higher. So in every stage the idea, the form, preceded and conditioned the material element, and in a sense we may correctly say that Aristotle gradually refined away his material element in the ascending scale. At the summit he would place the perfect and supreme Idea, God, the eternal antecedent of all activity, the prime mover of the universe. So in the end he identified God and Form. Strictly speaking, in his system God could not be a resultant of form and matter, for then God would not be the ultimate being, but some cause would lie behind him; and he would not be perfection, since some potentiality, the characteristic of matter, would still reside in him. As a matter of fact Aristotle in a number of passages identifies his ultimate material and form (ἡ ἐσχάτη ὕλη καὶ ἡ μορφή ταυτό);<sup>1</sup> not that he would have granted that there was a material element in the Supreme Being; but in the light of what we have just said we can understand how he might have held that the ultimate material and God were identical.<sup>2</sup>

It readily follows from Aristotle's concept of God as the prime mover, the source of all activity in the world, that God can be but one. Monotheism is the logical

<sup>1</sup> E. g. *Met.* VII, 6, 1045 b, 18 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the whole discussion of God in *Met.* XI.



result of the Aristotelian reasoning. Moreover it was inevitable that Aristotle should make God transcendent, that is, that he should place him above all objects of the natural world, since if the First Cause is pure thought unmixed with matter, he cannot be immanent in material things. The immateriality which Plato gave to his ideas, his pupil transferred to God.

Midway between the natural and the supernatural worlds Aristotle placed man, whom he regarded as bound to the world of nature by his body and the lower elements of his mind, but connected with God through his reason, for he held that the human mind possessed attributes of the divine intelligence. Aristotle's psychology was based on his belief that there was a purpose in all nature, and on his view that in the individual were always united form and material. With reference to animate beings he showed that they had their formative principle within them, which brought to actuality the material which had the potentiality of life, and which determined the purpose for which the individual creature existed. This formative principle was then for him the soul of the animate being, whether plant, lower animal, or man; it was the internal principle which determined the processes of nutrition, growth, and decay common to all animate creatures, and no less the functions peculiar to the lower and the higher animals throughout the scale of life. The soul of a plant, then, he defined as the assimilative principle (*τὸ θρεπτικόν*). But creatures of the next higher stage, the so-called lower animals, he saw had senses, desires, and self-

movement; to their souls therefore he assigned the additional elements of sensation (τὸ αἰσθητικόν), appetite (τὸ ὀρεκτικόν), and motion (τὸ κινητικόν). Finally, he said, the human soul had mind (νοῦς) in addition to the elements possessed by the lower animals and plants, for man has the power of thought and reflection. Therefore man is the highest creature, the most perfect organism in the natural order.

But the human mind, as Aristotle pointed out, has two activities: it concerns itself with knowing and with reasoning; it is passive, receptive, in that it receives ideas from without, and creative in that it can reflect on its own ideas and so create new ideas which are in no sense dependent on material objects — are, as we say, abstract ideas. To this creative part of man's soul, to his reason alone, did Aristotle grant eternal existence and immortality. All other activities of the soul — knowing, moving, seeking, feeling, and assimilating — he held to be bound to the body and hence to perish with it; but the reasoning element he maintained was in no way dependent on the material world, was always active, and therefore it alone was immortal and eternal.<sup>1</sup> Yet after establishing the immortality of the reasoning element Aristotle failed to define the fate of the immortal human reason after death; of joys or pains beyond the grave he gave no description.

In ethics Aristotle taught that the highest human good was that happiness which results when man's mind

<sup>1</sup> On the foregoing see the *De anima* in general and especially II, 1; III, 4 and 5.

under the direction of reason is active toward virtuous ends; that moral virtue is a habit which is acquired by cultivation, a condition which is attained when the appetites are controlled by the will and guided by the reason. Now in the Aristotelian system man alone was regarded as capable of moral action. The animals are guided by appetite and lack intelligence to direct them; God is pure reason and therefore we cannot attribute to him any moral qualities; but man possesses the characteristics of the lower creatures and has at the same time the divine element, the reason, which connects him with God. Therefore since man is endowed with reason which can either prompt the will to check the appetite or bid the will let appetite go its way, he is capable of choice and so of morality. By thus emphasizing the controlling function of the will Aristotle prepared the way for the Stoics, as we shall see in our next lecture. Virtue in the active life of society was to him always the mean between two extremes, both of which were themselves vices. Courage, for example, lies midway between cowardice and rashness; temperance between indulgence and abstinence; and so on through the whole range of the ethical virtues. Above these virtues of the active life, Aristotle placed a higher rank — the intellectual virtues of wisdom, knowledge, good-sense, practical insight, etc., which result from a harmony of the active and the receptive parts of the intellect. Highest of all he put the speculative activities of the intellect, which he regarded as its proper and most constant function. This “theoretical” or “contem-

plative " life (*θεωρητικὸς βίος*) he said brought man his highest happiness just because it was his highest activity. Yet Aristotle could not hold out the hope that men could attain this joy fully or in great numbers; he saw that the greater part of human life was concerned with practical virtues, with good character; and he believed that only when man was good in everyday life could he hope to rise to the contemplative life, but that in that life, at moments, he might catch glimpses of the happiness which belongs continuously to God.<sup>1</sup>

Unquestionably Aristotle did a large service in putting ethics on a more scientific basis than his predecessors had done, but his chief contributions to the subject with which we are now concerned were in the field of theology. There, as we have already noted, he established the cosmological and teleological arguments for the existence of God; and he also introduced a clearly defined transcendentalism, thus making explicit what had been implied in parts of Plato's teachings. Yet he failed to provide that satisfaction for religious hopes and fears which men desired, and so, as I have said, the cold scientific reasoning of the Stagirite had far less influence in religion than the enthusiastic thought of his teacher until after many centuries had passed.

Although we may readily recognize that the influence of philosophy on the religious belief of the most enlightened in this time was great, we may still question

<sup>1</sup> Cf. on the foregoing the two ethical works, the *Nicomachean* and the *Eudemian Ethics*, entire.



whether it had any considerable influence on the religious customs of the people. Practice is always more conservative than thought, and we find that the thinkers who did most to destroy traditional theology frequently conformed to the traditional worship of the common man. So Socrates sacrificed in the usual way to the gods, although he held advanced ideas with regard to prayers and oaths. No doubt Plato and Aristotle passed for pious so far as their religious practices were concerned, in spite of the fact that they put new content into ancient forms. The former frequently made the speakers in his dialogues refer to the gods in quite the traditional way, and in his *Timaeus* he set forth a kind of systematic theology; in his *Laws*, written in his old age as a supplement to his *Republic*, he planned for his ideal state a religious organization, involving a plurality of gods, not dissimilar to that of the actual Athenian state; he represented his chief spokesman as proving the existence of the gods, giving warrant for the familiar practices of religion, and justifying the ways of gods to men; moreover he proposed to have statutes against impiety and the introduction of religious rites not recognized by law.<sup>1</sup> Aristotle clearly had slight respect for the common notions as to the gods, but for all that he regarded the worship of many gods as natural, and he thought that worship was indispensable for the existence of a state; therefore in his *Politics* he made a place for a polytheistic religion, defined the duties of priests and other sacred officials, and provided that all the expenses

<sup>1</sup> *Laws*, VI, 759 and X entire.



of public worship should be borne by the state.<sup>1</sup> The charge, prompted by political passion, brought against Aristotle for impiety in deifying Hermias, the prince of Mysia, shows that he was not regarded as atheistic.

As a matter of fact with all the changes in religious thought which the centuries brought in Greece, sacred customs and practices remained but little altered down to the end of antiquity. Theology has small interest for the common man. He must depend for his assurance on the performance of those acts which immemorial custom has sanctioned as the proper means of securing the favor of the gods, rather than on the speculations of some theologian or on his own poor reflections. Sacrifice and prayer before the sacred statue or symbol, community worship at the great festivals, private devotion at the shrine within the home, rites of riddance and appeasing, the promise and payment of vows remained the practices of the mass of men for many centuries after the prophet of Nazareth delivered his message — indeed Christianity took over many of these things and has kept them to the present day. Then too we must remember that the civic character of the common Greek religion had a higher side, for it strengthened the bond of family and of city-state; and through the great festivals at Olympia, Delphi, and Nemea it helped to form a dim concept of a Greek nation. Thus it elevated men's notions of responsibility to the social units, both small and great. Furthermore, apart from the

<sup>1</sup> *Politics*, VI, 8, 1322 b, 18 ff.; VII, 8, 1328 b, 12 ff.; 1329 a, 27 ff.; 1330 a, 8 f.; 1331 b, 4-6, 17 f.

civic and national sides of Greek religion, the general religious thought of the mass was gradually ennobled with the passage of the centuries; in spite of the survival into later antiquity of certain rude and primitive elements, religion became more moral and more spiritual, as we have already seen was the case with the Eleusinian Mysteries. Plato and Aristotle in the very nature of the case could have little influence on the many in their day; but when their thoughts had been transmuted into terms which the common man could comprehend and express in living, philosophy became for the many a guide of life.

## VI

### LATER RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHIES

PLATO and Aristotle mark the culmination of a great period in Greek thought. After them metaphysical speculation made little if any advance in antiquity. Indeed we are all aware of the fact that the greater part of the thinking world has been divided between Platonists and Aristotelians ever since, although in our own time we are seeing a return by some to the philosophic position of the Sophists and Heraclitus.

Now in our discussion of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle you must have felt that their systems were for the intellectual élite. The large demands which they make upon the reason and the habit of reasoning unfit them for the great majority of mankind, since the average man desires a practical guide in life which he can readily follow, rather than a philosophical system which he can grasp only by the careful use of his intellect. Furthermore, in the period after Alexander, when national life and interests were weakened or destroyed by the Macedonian's conquests and the struggles of his successors, the individual was forced to withdraw from public life; he lost the satisfactions which the politics of his community had once furnished, felt himself without the social supports which the compact life of his city-state had formerly given, and so, turned in on

himself, he naturally sought for a sure rule of life and a guarantee of individual happiness. We shall now consider first a school of practical philosophy that followed Aristotle — that of the Stoics, and then some mystic philosophies of the early centuries of our era.

Socrates, the great teacher and the dramatic spokesman of Plato's dialogues, gave the impulse to many philosophic systems. The only one we need to glance at now is that of the Cynics founded by Antisthenes, who had been one of Socrates' many pupils. It was continued by the whimsical and notorious Diogenes of Sinope, whose name is familiar to us all. The founder of Cynicism emphasized the Socratic aim of individual virtue to the neglect of all else, for like his master he maintained that virtue was the only good, the sole aim in life, and that it was sufficient in itself for happiness. But he also went to the extreme of declaring that all external relations and obligations were to be neglected, and that there was no middle ground of the slightest importance between virtue and vice. Antisthenes also taught that whoever possessed virtue was wise, the rest of the world foolish; and that virtue was a thing which could be taught, and which once learned could never be lost. To the Cynic all pleasure was vicious, but sweat and toil blessings if associated with the individual freedom which was the aim of the school. Although the Cynics were concerned only with practical virtue in this world here and now, their puritanical and doctrinaire system deserves this place in our consideration, because it was the first to attempt to make philosophy a practical

so called Socrates

guide for the common man in everyday life. It is quite true that this was also Socrates' position, but his mind and common sense took so large a view of the relations of man that he never fell into the narrow exclusiveness of the Cynics. With them philosophy was not speculative, but became the art of virtuous living; it easily degenerated into insolent and ostentatious show, and doubtless deserved many of the jibes which the later satirists threw at it. Within the sect, strictly speaking, the doctrine of virtue as man's chief good came to little because it lacked the principle of moral activity. The will of man was not challenged to act in advancing him along the path of virtue. But Stoicism took over the doctrine, gave it life by insisting on the exercise of the will in the practice of virtue, and made thereby such a contribution to the practical life of virtue that we are still the Stoics' heirs.

It was toward the close of the fourth century that Zeno of Citium in the island of Cyprus established a school in the Painted Porch (Στοὰ ποικίλη) at Athens. Zeno had been an adherent of no one school or philosophical sect: he had listened to both Cynic, Megarian, and Platonic teachers. It was natural, therefore, in view of the training of the founder and of the fact that he was born in a place distant from the great centers of the Greek world, that the Stoic school from the beginning should draw its tenets from many sources and that it should have a cosmopolitan character.

Furthermore the time in which it was founded had a potent and direct influence upon it. Alexander the



Great died in 323 B.C., after carrying his arms to the banks of the Indus and enlarging the Greek world far beyond even his own vast dreams. The ideal state, even in the mind of Alexander's great teacher Aristotle, was at this time thought to be one which corresponded closely to the actual Greek state, a community of limited size, whose free population should be all of the same stock, and one in which the manual toil should be performed by slaves. A sharp contrast to this was the mighty empire which Aristotle's pupil carved in an incredible fashion out of Europe, Africa, and Asia. It is not to be wondered at that a philosophy, the principles of which were drawn from various Athenian schools, as I have just said, and which was developed by men like Zeno of Citium and Chrysippus of Soli in Cilicia should have a character which made it appeal to the enlarged and varied world of Hellenism, and to the Roman Empire which succeeded that of Alexander.

The development of Stoicism corresponded to its eclectic origin. The system established by Zeno was enlarged and rounded out by Chrysippus. It was welcomed by the Romans in the second century B.C. when Panaetius of Rhodes transplanted the system to Rome. In the hands of its earliest leaders the school had held to a severe and uncompromising doctrine, not dissimilar to that of the Cynics. But Panaetius greatly modified this teaching and accommodated the school to the other great philosophic systems of the time, especially to the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle; and thus he made Stoicism suited to the educated Roman world. Among

1 Zeno  
2 Chrysippus  
3 Panaetius

his disciples he numbered many of the Roman aristocracy of the second century B.C., the most famous of whom were Laelius and the younger Scipio. That unyielding dogmatism of the older school which had paralleled Cynicism in teaching that between virtue and vice there was no intermediate position, that the philosopher was the perfectly virtuous man, and that he and the vicious were absolutely separated, was replaced by a doctrine of the possibility of gradual progress in virtue. Indeed some with good sense held that this was the most to which man could attain, that he could never hope to reach perfection, but that his duty was to accomplish a daily advance toward excellence. Panaetius did a great service in adapting Stoicism to life. A famous pupil of Panaetius was Posidonius of Apamea in Syria, who drew many Romans to hear him at his school in Rhodes, among them Cicero and Pompey. He carried still further the synthesis of Stoicism with Platonism and Aristotelianism, and by the astounding range of his learning and the brilliancy of his style acquired a large influence. He seems also to have given Stoicism a strong religious cast.

Like other philosophies Stoicism had embraced many subjects — logic, including dialectic and rhetoric, physical science, including cosmology and theology, and ethics. But by the first century of the Roman Empire it had become almost exclusively a philosophy of moral and religious edification, well calculated to steel men against the distress and trouble of that age. Its great representatives in this last period were Seneca, Epicte-

*Syria* ?

tus, and Marcus Aurelius, whose works are still a source of strength for many thoughtful men.

Let us now consider briefly the system of the Stoics. Our theme confines us chiefly to the moral and religious sides of their philosophy; but this is only a slight limitation, for true to the teachings of the Cynics, who had greatly influenced the founder of the school, throughout their history the Stoics laid much emphasis on ethics, that is, on the art of a righteous and virtuous life. They were never so much concerned with speculation as to the nature of virtue as with its practice. To them virtue was man's highest aim, and by it they meant righteousness in the practical relations of life. They defined it as a condition of the soul in which the soul is in continuous harmony with itself. Virtue they subdivided into the four chief elements of intelligence, discretion, courage, and justice. Some also recognized subordinate virtues, but these I name were the four that made up the supreme excellence. Furthermore the Stoics, like Socrates and the Cynics, identified virtue with knowledge and regarded the ideal philosopher as the one who had attained to true and complete wisdom and consequently to perfect virtue. Therefore the ideal of the wise man became the very center of the Stoic doctrine. He was thought to combine in himself all perfection, and as Seneca says, differs from God only by being mortal. As I have already observed, the early Stoics had fixed an absolute gulf between the perfect wise man and the unwise; like the Cynics they had declared that virtue once attained could not be lost;

but the practical good sense of a later age modified these extreme views and taught that there were degrees in virtue, and that the most that the ordinary man could do was daily to advance and make progress toward his goal. As Seneca says: "I am not yet wise, nor shall I ever be. Do not ask me to be equal to the best but rather to be better than the base. This is enough for me — to take away daily something from my faults and daily to reject my errors."<sup>1</sup> That man might attain to virtue, according to the Stoic, he must free himself from the world and its influences; through the exercise of his will he must strive to attain to freedom from all excess of feeling and passion. The extremist said that he must raise himself to a position where he was entirely free from passion, where he had attained to complete *ἀπάθεια*. The milder Stoics held the view that the wise man would not be one who felt no passion or desire, but rather one in whom virtue overmastered the passions. The mastery, whether complete or partial, all agreed was to be attained by the exercise of the will; therefore man must regard as wholly indifferent to him all things that are not within the control of that faculty. On this point Epictetus discourses most interestingly.<sup>2</sup> He points out that the materials we employ in life are indifferent to us, neither good nor bad; they are like the dice with which we play our game. But like the gamester we must try to manage life dexterously; whatever happens we must say: "Externals are not

<sup>1</sup> *De vita beata*, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Diss.*, I, 1; II, 5, 13; and often.



within my power; choice is. Where then shall I seek good and evil? Why, within, in what is my own." And then he continues, pointing out that we must count nothing good or evil, profitable or hurtful, or of any concern to us, that is controlled by others. In tranquillity and calm we must accept what life brings, concerned only with what actually depends on the will of each one of us. We must act in life as we do in a voyage: the individual can choose the pilot, the sailors, and the hour of his departure; after that he must meet quietly all that comes, for he has done his part; and if a storm arise, he must face with indifference disaster or safety, for these matters are quite beyond the control of his will. So sickness and health, abundance and need, high position or the loss of station are things which my will cannot control. Therefore to me as a philosopher they are indifferent; I must have no anxiety about them; they really are not my affair. But my thoughts and my acts are matters that I can control, and in them I must find all my concern. The external circumstances, the acts of others, do not touch me, but my own acts, my own relations, my own inner life are things to which I must give all of my attention. So the Stoic reasoned, holding that virtue was quite sufficient for happiness, and that it made man master of his world. Thus we see that to the doctrine of virtue, which the Cynics had magnified, the Stoics had added the vitalizing principle of the operation of man's will, and thereby had made the pursuit of wisdom, which to them was identical with virtue, a powerful means of moral and spiritual edification.



But when the Stoic discoursed of virtue and wisdom, what did he conceive the highest aim of man to be? "To live in accord with Nature," was the answer which the followers of Zeno usually gave. By that they meant that man must bring himself into accord with that Nature which rules all things; that he must make his will and reason agree with the universal will and reason of which in truth they are a part. Others said that one must live in harmony with himself. But as we shall presently see, their definition was essentially the same as that of their fellows, for to the Stoic man was in himself an epitome of the cosmos.

In their explanation of the universe the Stoics held to a materialism which they borrowed from the teachings of Heraclitus, who had maintained that only matter had any existence whatever; therefore their system was in theory a materialistic monism, but with their monistic principle they combined an idea which in reality they had derived from Aristotle, apparently without realizing the possible consequence to their view that matter alone exists. Although holding that everything is material, they recognized in all things the presence of an active and a passive principle, the active principle forming and directing, the other being formed and directed, so that by the operation of the active principle upon the passive all the phenomena of the world come into being. The passive principle corresponded to Aristotle's material, while the active principle included both his efficient and final causes. To their active principle the Stoics gave all the characteristics that Heraclitus had given to his

λόγος, reason, or Anaxagoras to his νοῦς, mind. In short they attributed to it all the characteristics of reason and intelligence, so that in spite of their argument that the active principle was no less material than the passive, that it was the element of fire or vapor or both, it was inevitable that in practice their philosophy should ultimately tend toward a dualism and that the ancient conflict of matter and mind, of body and soul, should have its place in their teaching. They thought that the operative principle, fire, the divine reason, expresses itself in every part of the universe, that everything which exists is permeated by this divine spirit and directed by it. It is nothing less than the world-reason, God, which begets all things; so that they called it λόγος σπερματικός, that is, the reason that contains within itself the germs of all things that are to be. Now since man is of course a part of the cosmos, the Stoic argued that in him the world-reason naturally expresses itself; it is that which guides him, in fact it is his reason, the directing portion of his soul. And it is the possession of this soul, itself a part of the universal reason, which makes it possible for man to live in accord with Nature, for he attains that aim whenever his soul is in agreement with the universal soul which is its source. In this way the Stoic, for all his materialism, emphasized the divine nature of man and the community of human reason with God.

The pantheistic character of this philosophy is now evident. The world-reason, God, whatever the Stoic might call it, is all, embraces all within itself, and per-

meates all. This conception is in marked contrast to the teachings of Aristotle and the later Platonists, who conceived of God as transcendent, removed from the world about us. We have here the doctrine of the immanence of God, in whom all things live and move and have their being, because the world-reason is the principle on which all life and action directly depend. In this doctrine of the immanence of God the Stoics brought together again the worlds of matter and of reason which Plato had separated; and in the pantheistic character of this teaching they established a belief which later fitted in with the general course of pagan thought under the Roman Empire, when philosophy and religion were at one in recognizing the existence in the world of but a single divine principle, although all systems, including Stoicism, found a way to provide for the multitude of gods which popular belief demanded.

The Stoic theology then is in technical language a materialistic pantheism, and the world is only a mode of God. Such abstractions are difficult to grasp and have no personal meaning for the common man. But in practice the Stoic thought and spoke of God as a personality. Nowhere is this feeling expressed with so much devotion as in Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus; the language is largely that of poetic tradition, but the thought is not that of common polytheism:

Most glorious of immortals, many named, powerful over all,  
 Zeus, thou author of all nature, guiding all with law,  
 Hail to thee. Thee 'tis right all mortals should address,  
 For from thee men derive their race, they who alone  
 Of all things mortal, living, creeping on the ground,

*Stoic pantheistic & materialistic*

Have gift of speech. So will I hymn thee, and thy power forever sing.  
 For thee this entire cosmos, circling earth around,  
 Obeys where'er thou ledest, and 'tis gladly ruled by thee.  
 Such servant hast thou in thy hands invincible,  
 The two-edged thunderbolt, ever living flame.  
 For by its strokes are all things in nature wrought;  
 With it thou dost direct the common law, which throughout all  
 Forever moves, with every gleam commingled, great and small.  
 'Tis this hath made thee supreme king o'er all;  
 For naught e'er comes to pass on earth apart from thee, O God,  
 Nor in the sacred pole of ether above nor in the deep,  
 Save all the sin men do with folly cursed.<sup>1</sup>

But some of you have doubtless remembered that Fate (*εἰμαρμένη*) plays a large part in Stoicism, that the Stoic writers describe it as the cause that works through all things and brings all things to pass.<sup>2</sup> We must therefore consider what the Stoic meant by Fate, how he explained the existence of evil, and what provision he made for the freedom of the will. Fate was identified with reason or with what we call natural law; and since the Stoic held that it does not operate in a mechanical way, but is directed by reason to the best possible ends, it followed that Fate became identical with Providence (*πρόνοια*).<sup>3</sup> This world then for the Stoic is the best of all possible worlds. Yet the question will inevitably be asked as to why it is that evil can exist in such a world, in which a particular Providence rules all things for the best. We have already seen that Cleanthes held that God directed all things but the deeds of the wicked:

<sup>1</sup> Stob. *Ecl.* I, 1, 12 = SVF, I, 537.

<sup>2</sup> Diog. Laërt. VII, 149 = SVF, I, 175.

<sup>3</sup> Aëtius, I, 27, 5 = SVF, I, 176; II, 974 ff.

*εἰμαρμένη* = *πρόνοια*



Naught e'er comes to pass on earth apart from thee, O God,  
 Nor in the sacred pole of ether above nor in the deep,  
 Save all the sin men do with folly cursed.

For the most part however the Stoics did not attempt to place evil outside the domain of Fate, but boldly maintained that the existence of good is inconceivable without the existence of its opposite, evil. They taught that many of the things that are ordinarily reckoned evils by men were nothing of the sort; what we call physical evils, for example, were for them not evils, because they could not affect the wise man, the philosopher; or if they affected him, they could serve only as discipline, and therefore contribute to good ends. Man has within him the possibility of good; he must also have the possibility of evil, and therefore he must possess the freedom of choice without which goodness or evil has no moral value. Evil therefore like the good must be part of a world in which God rules all things to the best and wisest ends.

Still there remains the difficulty that if man can determine his own choice, how can we still speak of Fate as directing the world. The answer is found in the nature of man, whose body is properly directed by his soul. This soul through experience develops reason, and the reasoning soul, as we have already seen, is a part of the universal reason, God. When the reason rules a man's impulses and directs his will to follow the right course, it leads him into the path of freedom, for freedom consists in the complete subjugation of the impulses to reason. The Stoic had only to appeal to common ex-



perience to show that if the body and its impulses prevail, man obviously is a slave; but if reason dominates he is free. As Epictetus taught: "Freedom and slavery, the first is the name of virtue, the other of vice, but both are the effects of choice. Those who do not have the power of choice are touched by neither of these things. But the soul is accustomed to be master of the body, and the things of the body have properly nothing to do with the will to choose; for no man is a slave if he is free in his power to choose."<sup>1</sup> The perfect philosopher, then, is wholly free, for his every act is guided by reason, and therefore he lives perfectly in accord with Nature and himself. Freedom lies in choice, but the choice once made, the consequences inevitably follow. So the freedom of the individual was reconciled with the rule of a determining Fate.

We have thus far seen that Stoicism was a philosophy for the individual; that it demanded that man, being a free agent, recognize his high calling as a reasonable being and put himself by the exercise of his will into accord with Nature and himself, and so attain or at least advance toward perfection. But in contrast to Cynicism Stoicism did not demand that its sectaries should cut themselves off from society; on the contrary it recognized that man is normally a member of a social group. If in its doctrine of personal edification it was strongly individualistic, it was no less cosmopolitan in its social philosophy. Although the earlier Stoics had not taken part in political life — probably because of the condi-

<sup>1</sup> *Gnomol.* Stobaei 31 Schenkl; cf. *Diss.* 4, 1 (*On Freedom*) entire.

tions of the time, — none had forbidden participation in public affairs, but on the contrary all favored it. Moreover the Stoic could not limit his view to the small political unit or to the society contained therein; but inasmuch as each individual possesses a soul that is a part of the cosmic reason, all mankind is a community of reasoning beings, and every man is a brother of every other.<sup>1</sup> Thus Stoicism gave a philosophic basis to the idea of the brotherhood of man. It taught also that external circumstances, birth, wealth, high position, physical freedom or slavery, are indifferent matters; that the slave if a philosopher is the equal of the philosophic emperor. Such doctrines as these gave a new dignity to the individual and were destined to produce great social effects in the course of time: they resulted toward the close of the first century of our era in a new humanitarian spirit which began to care for the poor and the weak. Ultimately the Stoic Roman jurists wrote into the great law-codes the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, distinguishing between natural law, according to which all men are brothers on an equal footing, and human law which has brought about distinctions. These law-codes saved the written doctrine for the later centuries, and Christianity on its part absorbed much of Stoic teaching; through these two channels we have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cic. *de Fin.* III, 64 mundum autem censent (Stoici) regi numine deorum eumque esse quasi communem urbem et civitatem hominum et deorum; et unumquemque nostrum eius mundi esse partem, ex quo illud natura consequi ut communem utilitatem nostrae anteponamus. Sen. *Ep.* 95, 52 membra sumus corporis magni, etc.; cf. Epict. I, 3 (*How one should proceed from the fact that God is the Father of all men to the conclusions therefrom*).

inherited many of the ideas that are moving forces in modern democracy.

These matters touch us so closely that we may well pause for a moment and listen to some ancient witnesses. On the question whether a slave could be said to confer benefits on his master, Seneca wrote that whoever denied the possibility of this was ignorant of the principles of all human law: "for the question is as to the spirit of the one who confers the benefit, not as to his position in life. Virtue is closed to no man; but she is open for all, admits all, invites all, both freeborn and freedmen, slaves, kings, and exiles all alike. She does not choose house or wealth; she is satisfied with the bare man and asks nothing more."<sup>1</sup> Again he points out that only the body can be enslaved; that no prison can hold the mind and keep it from consorting with the divine.<sup>2</sup> He sums up: "All of us have the same origin, the same source; no man is nobler than another save he who has a more upright character and one better fitted to honorable pursuits."<sup>3</sup> The great jurists speak no less plainly than the philosopher. Julius Paulus, at the beginning of the third century of our era, laid down the principle that nature has established between men a certain relationship; this his contemporary Ulpian expressed more plainly in these words: "By natural law all men are equal." And Florentinus wrote: "Slavery is a provision of the law of nations, by which one man, contrary to the law of nature, is subject to the domination of another."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sen. *de Ben.* 3, 18, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Dig.* I, 1, 4, 5, 4; XVII, 32.

Such doctrines as these naturally broke down allegiance to city and nation, and made men feel that they were citizens of the world. Seneca distinguished two states, the one that into which a man is born; the other, the great and true commonwealth where dwell both gods and men, in which one looks not to this corner or to that, but measures its borders by the course of the sun.<sup>1</sup> In like language Musonius taught that the wise man, i. e., the philosopher, believes himself to be a citizen of the city of God, which consists of gods and men.<sup>2</sup> So the Emperor Marcus Aurelius reflected: "To me as Antoninus my city is Rome, but as a man it is the universe."<sup>3</sup>

We may seem to have wandered somewhat from the religious aspect of Stoicism, but the digression finds its justification not only in the fact that both the belief in the natural equality of men and the cosmopolitan character of Stoicism grew out of the doctrine that each man's reason is a part of the universal reason, but also in the significance these things had for that time and for ours.

The Stoic felt himself commissioned to preach and to turn men from their evil ways; he became a missionary to the world, exhorting men to the pursuit of sobriety, patience, virtue, and to the imitation of God. Seneca recalled with new emphasis Plato's definition of man's duty: "The first point in the worship of the gods is to believe that the gods exist; second to render unto

<sup>1</sup> *De otio*, 4, 1; cf. *Epist.* 68, 2.

<sup>2</sup> VI, 44; and often.

<sup>3</sup> *Stob. Flor.* 40, 9.



them their majesty; to render likewise their goodness without which there is no majesty; to know that the gods preside over the world, that they direct the universe by their power, protect mankind, and sometimes have regard for individuals. The gods neither bring evil nor have it in themselves; but they chastise and check some men, they inflict penalties, sometimes they punish under the guise of blessings. Would'st thou propitiate the gods? Be thou good thyself. He has worshipped them aright who has imitated them." And again: "The divine nature is not worshipped with the fat bodies of slain bulls, or with gold or silver votive offerings, or with money collected for the sacred treasury, but with a pious and upright will."<sup>1</sup> Epictetus reviews the gifts of providence to men and asks: "What words can praise the works of providence in us and set them forth according to their worth? If we have understanding, ought we to do anything else, individually or all together, save sing hymns and bless the deity and tell of his benefits? . . . But since most of you have become blind, should there not be someone to fulfill this duty and on behalf of all to sing the hymn to God? For what else can I do, a lame old man, but sing hymns to God? If I were a nightingale, I should do the part of a nightingale; if I were a swan, I should do the part of a swan. But now I am a rational creature, and therefore I must praise God. This is my task. I will do it, nor will I leave my post, so long as I may keep it; and I urge you to join in this same song."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 95, 50; 115, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Diss.* I, 16, 15-21.



Under the Empire Stoicism lost the moderate interest in speculation that it had once had, and became almost exclusively a moral philosophy. It was an age which called for moral resistance, when men were obliged to steel themselves to endure oppression and disaster, to "endure and refrain." This is the motto of the later Stoics, *ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου*, by which they meant: "Refrain from all that thy will cannot control; endure all that may assault thee; practise thyself in following the guide of reason; resist all passions." This is almost the sum total of the discourses of Epictetus. The ancient conflict between body and soul also came to the front once more, and Stoicism showed the same ascetic tendency that is found in all the later philosophies. To it Marcus Aurelius gives clearest expression. Reflecting on his own nature the Emperor quotes a saying of Epictetus: "Thou art a poor soul burdened with a corpse."<sup>1</sup> Again in self-exhortation he says: "This thing I am is but flesh, breath, and the guiding reason. Farewell my books! strain after them no more. They are not for thee. As if already in the presence of death, despise thy flesh — it is only foul blood and bones, a web and tissue of sinews and veins and arteries. Consider breath too! What is it? A puff of wind never the same, but every moment exhaled and again inhaled. Last comes the guiding reason — on that set all thy mind."<sup>2</sup>

The Emperor bids his books farewell. Philosophy was no longer a thing for the closet and the scholar's

<sup>1</sup> IV, 41.

<sup>2</sup> II, 2.

study, but a matter of practical life in the market place and public square; the unlettered might pursue it as well as the learned, for it was the art of living — an art which the noblest pursued with all the enthusiasm of religious emotion. Although the Stoic was most concerned with the present, and could offer no continued life for the individual soul beyond the time when all the universe should sink back into the original fire, his fervor could be that of the seer with a vision of eternity.

The contributions which the Stoics made to the ethical and religious life were large. They showed that there is a moral order in nature to which man as a part of nature must conform; by emphasizing the community of reason between man and God, so that in Epictetus' phrase we are but fragments of God,<sup>1</sup> they gave a religious sanction to duty toward God and man which had hitherto been lacking; and by the conclusions which they logically drew as to the brotherhood of man, disregarding distinctions of birth, position, or race, and looking to character alone, they gave a great impulse to the improvement of morals, to the spread of justice and kindness in private relations, and to a genuine love for humanity. The stimulus which a belief in personal immortality might have given them was replaced by a sense of divine kinship and a challenge to the will to choose the nobler course under the guide of reason.

<sup>1</sup> *Diss.* I, 14, 6; II, 8, 11: σὺ ἀπόσπασμα εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ· ἔχεις τι ἐν σεαυτῷ μέρος ἐκείνου.

On the theological side they established the doctrine of the immanence of God in opposition to the transcendental views of the Platonists and Aristotelians. Since the whole cosmos is in their view animated by the universal reason, every part of it is alive. The heavenly bodies were therefore naturally regarded as divine, gods to whom the names of the greater gods of popular theology were conveniently given. But on the whole the traditional gods were explained allegorically, being regarded as the names assigned to various manifestations of God in nature. So Zeus was the heavens or the ether, Hera air, Poseidon the waters, Demeter earth, Hephaestus fire, Hades darkness, and so on. Now this physical allegorizing tended to destroy all belief in the mythological divinities more effectually perhaps than any other assault that had been made since the attacks began in the sixth century. But we must not think that the Stoics disbelieved in the existence of gods. I have just spoken of their doctrine that the heavenly bodies are divine; and they held that the spirits of the wisest and best survive the body as lesser divinities, as daemons. All these, however, will cease to be when the present age comes to an end and the cosmos sinks back into universal fire.

In the religious philosophies that we have thus far considered the reason and the will were the chief means by which security and happiness here or hereafter could be obtained. These systems taught that salvation was a

matter of man's own effort, and within his own power. Yet in Marcus Aurelius, for example, we have again and again clear evidence that the last great Stoic was conscious of the insufficiency of man to save his own soul unaided, and the philosophies to which we are now to turn recognize man's weakness and make salvation an act of grace from God.

As we have remarked before, the last three centuries before our era among the Greeks were centuries in which their national life and culture decayed. Autocratic forms of government arose which cut men off from active participation in politics and turned their attention in upon themselves. There was a loss of creative power in literature, art, and speculative thought; and men were conscious of a failure of the sense which their forefathers had had, that this life could give them great satisfaction. These things, and the extremes of wealth and poverty, terror of the imperial power, the selfish greed and hopelessness of the mass of the people, all combined under the early Empire to fill the minds of the thoughtful with sadness and pessimism. We find these sentiments in every writer of the first two centuries of our era who deals with contemporary society. Seneca feels that the world is lost and helpless; that life itself is a fatal gift compared with which nothing is so deceitful and treacherous. Filled with ardour for his philosophy and with confidence in the efficacy of its moral teachings, he nevertheless at times loses heart. This is likewise true of the rest. As we read the pages of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, in spite of the inspiring

words of that halting slave who in Nicopolis preached high fortitude to his hearers and of the Emperor who in distant camp among the Quadi on the banks of the Gran or in winter quarters at Carnuntum recounted his blessings and exhorted his own soul to endure, we have at times an inevitable sense of the hopelessness of the struggle. Furthermore, as has been frequently pointed out, the last centuries before our era had been marked by a feeling on the part of many of a separation from God and by a longing in some way to bridge the gulf between the human and the divine, to secure a revelation from heaven, and to attain to direct vision and knowledge of God. As the satisfactions of life, which the earlier freer centuries had given, grew less, in weariness of spirit, conscious of his own weakness and lack of power to secure his soul's freedom and happiness, man turned for help from outside himself. The reason and the will alone had failed. God's grace was needed for salvation.

The conquests of Alexander had not only diffused Hellenic speech and thought over a wide area, but they had also opened the way by which the nearer East could influence the western part of the ancient world. Alexandria in Egypt became the chief intellectual center; from it especially spread intellectual movements to the remoter parts of the Roman world. As I hope to show in my next lecture, Greek culture became the common property of all educated men. It was natural also that some of the philosophies cultivated at Alexandria should show the influence of Jewish thought, for this



metropolis had been from its founding a center for Jews as well as Greeks.

The longing for tranquillity in this life, for a revelation of God, and for the assurance of personal salvation which could not find satisfaction in Stoicism, Epicureanism, and the later Aristotelian schools, led to a revival of Pythagorean mysticism and of Platonism. These elements, combined in more than one case with Jewish thought, were the materials out of which the principal mystic schools developed at Alexandria. The three with which we are chiefly concerned are Neopythagoreanism, Judeo-Alexandrian philosophy, and Neoplatonism.

The Pythagorean school had ceased to have a separate existence by the fourth century B.C., but the ideas which the school had cherished were not lost. In the last century before our era these doctrines were revived, and in accordance with the syncretistic spirit of the age were combined with Platonic teachings into a philosophic, or as we may more truly say, a theosophic system. The first representative of this revival known to us by name is Nigidius Figulus, a friend and contemporary of Cicero. Its most famous leader was Apollonius of Tyana in Cappadocia, who lived under Nero. By the third century a mass of marvellous legends had gathered about this Apollonius, which are preserved in his life, written about 210 A.D. by Philostratus at the request of the Empress Julia Domna.

The extant evidence shows us clearly that by the second century B.C. the process of reconciling Jewish theology with Greek philosophy had begun at Alexandria.

The first, however, to combine the two into a system, known to us as the Judeo-Alexandrian, was the learned Philo, who was born about 25 B.C. He belonged to one of the most prominent Jewish families; in 40 A.D., he was chosen to head a delegation of Alexandrian Jews which was sent to the Emperor Caligula. His purpose in common with the other adherents of this school was primarily religious, and he aimed at a better understanding of his own religion rather than at building up a system of philosophic thought. To accomplish his purpose he took from the Hellenic schools whatever seemed useful, without troubling himself overmuch about the logical relation of the parts which he wove together. The movement actually developed a school which had a large historical significance.

The third philosophy is Neoplatonism, founded at Alexandria, according to tradition, by Ammonius Saccas at the beginning of the third century. Ammonius had been reared in the Christian faith, but on reaching maturity returned to pagan philosophy. His instruction was given wholly by word of mouth. Of his numerous pupils the most famous were Origen, the church father, and Plotinus. The latter and his pupil Porphyry were the chief representatives of the school in the period we have now under consideration.

Obviously in the time at our disposal we cannot consider in detail all the several doctrines of these three schools, but we must focus our attention on certain elements which are of prime importance in the pagan philosophy of the day and most significant because of

their relation to Christianity. Before we proceed to this, however, I must ask you to remember that we are now dealing not with rigidly logical systems, but with mystic philosophies, with theosophies. There is much in them, therefore, that we cannot hope to understand clearly, because these philosophers themselves abandoned the path of reason alone and let intuition and emotion guide them in their loftiest experiences.

Let us first examine certain characteristics common to all these schools. They all combine large elements drawn from Platonism with borrowings from later philosophies, especially Stoicism; and, as I have already indicated, Judeo-Alexandrianism shows the influence of Jewish thought. All hold to the dual nature of man, a view which first became of religious significance with the Orphics in the sixth century. Plato, you will remember, emphasized the conflict of flesh and spirit, and we have seen how the Stoics, for all their monistic theory, came finally to the same dualism. Closely connected with this view was the contempt for the world of the senses which these schools show. This was due to a development of the Platonic doctrines of matter and of the descent of souls into corporeal dwellings; these teachings in their turn led to a confirmation of the belief that the ascetic life was the proper one for the philosopher — a doctrine which had been held in considerable degree by the Stoics and Cynics. In theology all maintained the transcendence of God, and postulated between God and this world intermediary powers, which work God's will and cause all the sensible phenomena with which we are

acquainted. Finally all believed in the possibility of a direct revelation of God to man, when in a state of enthusiasm or ecstasy. This belief in direct divine revelation, together with the ascetic tendencies of the several schools, led to the establishment of the ideal of sanctity as that toward which the faithful sectary should strive. Pythagoras was canonized by his later followers, Plato became "the divine"; Apollonius of Tyana grew in tradition to be the model of the saint on earth. He was regarded as one filled with divine inspiration, a worker of miracles. He ate no flesh, but lived solely on bread, fruits, and ordinary herbs; water was his only drink; he practised silence and neglected his person. The same description almost fits Plotinus, as made known to us by his biographer Porphyry. In all the essential practices these pagan saints anticipated their later Christian counterparts.

Let us look at the theology of these schools a little more closely. But before we proceed, it is important to define clearly what we mean by the transcendence of God, for the term is often loosely used. A transcendent god is one who is absolutely above the world and above man's knowledge, a god who is so far removed that man can have no dealings with him directly, nor can he deal directly with man or make his works manifest to man, save through an intermediary. Such essentially was Aristotle's God, his First Cause. The opposite idea is that of the immanence of God, such as we have seen in the Stoic teachings, in which God is conceived of as existing in all things. Now it is evident that in any



system of philosophy or theology which believes in a transcendent God, and yet regards the visible world, including man, as the creation of the divine, some provision must be made for a being or beings, mediary between the transcendent God and the world, which shall express God's will and make God intelligible to man. If such a being or beings do not exist to serve as mediators between the world and God, then man can have no knowledge of the divine whatsoever, and God cannot express himself in the world. Now in Plato's philosophy the transcendency of God was at least implicit, it was clearly defined in Aristotle's thought, and the idea certainly belonged to the Jewish-Alexandrian thought of the last two centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Philo sets forth the doctrine most plainly. According to him God is so far above all mortal things that he must be defined in a negative way. All that we can say of him is that he is pure being, incorporeal, invisible, without qualities, above all virtue, and above all knowledge. We therefore cannot say that God is good or beautiful, because he is above all beauty and goodness; he is eternal, unchanging, existing in and for himself alone. His perfection is beyond our power to comprehend; our intellect cannot grasp his nature. All that man can know or say of God is that God *is*.<sup>1</sup> Yet naturally Philo is not content with negative defini-

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to give here all the numerous references to Philo's works on which these and the following statements depend. The most important of Philo's works bearing on the nature of God are *de allegoriis legum*, *de somniis*, *de opificio mundi*, *de Cherubim*, *quod deus sit immutabilis*. For detailed references consult Zeller, *Phil. d. Griechen*, III, 2<sup>4</sup>, pp. 400 ff.



tions, but does attempt to express in a more or less traditional fashion the perfection of God; he speaks of him as that being which includes all reality within himself, or as the only being of whom real existence can be predicated; again as the absolute happy and perfect being; or as the original of all beauty. He likewise pictures God as the source of all activity, as the being to whom endless activity is as proper as it is for fire to burn or snow to chill; God is therefore the cause of all the activity in the world, as he is the supreme cause of all things.

Yet with his view of the transcendence of God, Philo could not say that God is present in the world save in his acts; and these acts he does not perform directly, for if God were to deal directly with the matter out of which the visible world is made, contact with that matter would defile the divine perfection. The creation of the world, therefore, God accomplished by incorporeal powers (*δυνάμεις*), by ideas (*ιδέαι*), which are his servants.<sup>1</sup> The chief of these is the supreme reason, the word, the *logos*. In this *logos* all the ideas have their place, as the plan of a city has its place in the soul of its architect. The *logos* stands midway between God and the created world; it is not eternal as God is, or mortal as we, but occupies a middle position. The indebtedness of Philo to Plato is self-evident. Plato's absolute and Plato's ideas have been made mediary between the transcendent God and the visible world. This term, *logos*, the word, had been familiar not only to Greek

<sup>1</sup> *De special. legib.* I, 329; *de vita Mosis*, II, 127 ff.

philosophy from the time of Heraclitus but it had also a verbal parallel at least in certain Jewish expressions, "the wisdom of God," "the word of God," which Philo interprets in terms of the logos.

According to Philo the logos has a double rôle. Through the logos God created the world out of inert and formless matter, and continues to reveal himself through it to the world. The logos also serves as the high priest, the intercessor and advocate of the world with God.<sup>1</sup> Let me here note, however, that in Philo's thought the logos could not take corporeal form; it could not become flesh and dwell among us, and therefore it was not possible that the logos should be identified completely with the idea of the Jewish Messiah.

Following Plato and the Stoics Philo teaches that man's reason, his soul, is a particle, so to speak, of the divine intelligence that has entered into the human body. The human spirit, therefore, is divine, but man's body is mortal and sinful. Here then, as in most of the philosophies which were influenced by Platonism, a discipline is necessary to subdue the flesh and free the spirit: man must constantly exercise his choice in preferring the things of the spirit, for through the gift of God man is free with power to choose the right or wrong. The moral obligation of man and the path of his salvation is the same as we have seen in earlier Greek thought. To this end Philo lays much weight on practice and education as contributing to advance in virtue; he is fired with a passionate longing for purity. In a notable

<sup>1</sup> *Quis rer. div. her.* 205 f.

passage he speaks thus to his own soul: "Haste thee, O my soul, to become God's dwelling place, pure, holy; to become strong instead of utterly weak, powerful instead of impotent, wise instead of foolish, most reasonable instead of wandering."<sup>1</sup> Yet he goes beyond his predecessors in teaching that man is so possessed by sin that he can escape from his bondage only by divine help; that his own reason and his own will are insufficient for the task. Knowledge and virtue are not acquired by unaided human effort, but are the gifts of God. Philo outdoes even the Stoics in requiring man to free himself from the passions of the body, and yet he points out that just because man is subject to these passions, because he is a sinner, he cannot unaided follow and imitate God, or make himself God's holy temple. Man's goodness then is due to the favor of God; salvation is an act of grace.

The end of man's effort and hope is to attain to knowledge of God and thereby to find supreme happiness. But man cannot reach this by his own will or intellect, for God is so far removed from the world that he cannot be fully apprehended by one dwelling here, so that the gulf between man and God must be bridged. This is possible, Philo teaches, when the soul in ecstasy passes out of itself, beyond the sensuous world, the realm of ideas and the logos, to be at one with God. This vision of God is the supreme blessing, accorded only to the most perfect and holy among men; in it the human soul

<sup>1</sup> *De somn.* I, 149. Wendland's transposition and choice of text are not followed here.

finds not only its rest and full satisfaction, but its own consummation.<sup>1</sup>

You recognize at once that we have here philosophy fired with religious emotion, that in Philo's system at the end reason gives way before a passionate desire for revelation through union with God. Philosophy has become theosophy. The ecstasy that we have hitherto studied, has been connected chiefly with the worship of Dionysus, in which it was stimulated by means which we find offensive. But this ecstasy is not aroused by dance or music, or indeed by contemplation, but is attained in a purely passive condition when the soul is emptied of itself and becomes one with the Absolute.

These same ideas — the transcendence of God, the existence of mediary powers between God and the world, the ascetic life as a means of growth, the dependence of man on God's grace for his salvation, the possibility of the Beatific Vision — all are common in varying degrees to all the mystic philosophies of the day. In the third century Neoplatonism became the most popular and influential. Through Origen and St. Augustine it passed into Christian theology. The real problem for Neoplatonism, as for the other religious philosophies of this time, was to set forth the way by which the soul of man could grasp the Divine directly and find its happiness and complete satisfaction in perfect unity with him. We have just seen how Philo had conceived of God as wholly transcendent, and had established the *logos* as the mediator who furnishes the necessary connection be-

<sup>1</sup> *De alleg. leg.* III, 29 ff.



tween the eternal, transcendent God and the created, temporal world. Plotinus outdid Philo in that he removed his God one stage still farther away. His definition of God is necessarily similar to that of Philo, but he endeavors to give a notion of an Absolute more remote, if possible, than that of his predecessors. God he says is neither reason itself nor can he be grasped by the use of reason, but is above all knowledge and reason.<sup>1</sup> We must conceive of him as absolute unity, as at once pure creative activity, the first cause, the power on which the world depends, and at the same time as the final cause toward which the world is tending. The acts of creation are constant; yet God does not create the visible world directly, but as the sun without effort or loss to itself sends out its rays, so God out of the fullness of his perfection emanates Intelligence (*Noûs*), in which are immanent the Ideas: these are the causes of all things which come into being. The second grade of emanation is that of the World-soul (*Ψυχή*), which pours itself out, so to speak, into the individual souls. The last stage of emanation is that of Matter, the material which in itself has no characteristics of being. The sensible world is produced by the action of the Ideas on Matter, forming and shaping it through Intelligence.<sup>2</sup> You will note here the four stages, God, Intelligence, Soul, and Matter, as compared with Philo's three, God, the Logos, and Matter.

You may well ask at this point why these later philosophers with their desire to know God, should still lay

<sup>1</sup> Porph. *Vita Plot.* 23; Plot. *Enn.* V, 1; VI, 9, 3; and often.

<sup>2</sup> *Enn.* IV, V, and VI.



so much emphasis on his transcendence, apparently vying with one another in pushing the Divine beyond the universe, which they still regarded as his creation. Now we have already seen that Plato implied that his material principle was imperfect and thereby the source of evil, and that his Absolute, the supreme Idea, was separate from matter. In the period we are now considering all schools which owed ultimate allegiance to Plato or the Pythagoreans held to a clearly defined dualistic view of the universe. Conscious that the visible, material world is imperfect and full of evil, unstable and decaying, they argued that God cannot be immanent in the world, for if he were, he would be subject to evil, imperfection, and change, whereas we must conceive him to be good, perfect, and unchanging unity. Therefore the motive which prompted all these theologians was their desire to save the unity and perfection of God by removing him from all possible contact with matter, to which some like the Neoplatonists, following Plato, absolutely denied all the attributes of being. And the doctrine of divine transcendence was the more natural for Philo and all who had come under the influence of Jewish thought, since the Old Testament constantly affirms the absolute exaltation and perfection of God. In like manner the doctrine of mediary powers was helped by the Jewish idea of the wisdom of God and the popular post-exilic belief in angels.

Yet when the theologians had removed God beyond the confines of the world, beyond all knowledge, they had still to deal with the passionate longing for knowl-

edge of God and for assurance of salvation which was strong in large numbers of the uninstructed as well as in the philosophic élite. This knowledge and assurance could only be supplied by a belief in the direct revelation of God to man. Such a belief was traditional in the Old Testament; on the Greek side it was fostered by the feeling that the great teachers Pythagoras and Plato were divinely inspired; and in the popular Oriental religions which we shall consider in a later lecture, divine revelation was a fundamental article of faith. But let us return to Plotinus.

The second grade of emanation in the Neoplatonic system is the World-soul ( $\Psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ),<sup>1</sup> which, though inferior to Intelligence ( $\text{No}\ddot{\upsilon}\varsigma$ ), is nevertheless divine and immaterial. It stands midway between Intelligence and Matter and is related to both. Within the World-soul, which is the highest of all souls, corresponding to Plato's idea of the Good, are all individual souls.<sup>2</sup> These descend into matter and, pervading bodies in all their parts, give them sensation, reason, and all their life. But even as the sunlight descending into darkness is dimmed or wholly lost, so by their descent and birth into corporeal forms souls are made to forget their divine origin. They wish to be independent; like children who leave their parents and dwell apart from them, the souls of men forget their own nature and their divine father; they lose their freedom; they honor that which is not honorable, and so fall deeper into sin. The sinner therefore must be turned from his ways, must be made

<sup>1</sup> Plot. *Enn.* V, 1 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Enn.* IV, 3, 7, and 9.

to remember his divine race, to honor the things of the spirit, and to cease reverencing those things which are not the soul's concern.<sup>1</sup> The soul's return is to be accomplished by an asceticism with which we are now familiar. This the leaders illustrated in their own lives. Porphyry tells us that his master remained unmarried, abstained from animal food, lived in the simplest fashion, and so despised his body that he seemed ashamed of its possession.<sup>2</sup> The pupil laid even more stress on the subjugation of the flesh that the soul might be free and return toward God. "The more we turn toward that which is mortal," he says, "the more we unfit our minds for the infinite grandeur, and the more we withdraw from attachment to the body, in that same measure we approach the divine."<sup>3</sup> He taught that men must regard their bodies as garments, which not only burden but actually defile them, and which they like athletes must lay aside that naked and unclothed they may enter the stadium to contend in the Olympia of the soul.<sup>4</sup>

Plotinus, however, held that men would not all rise above the plane of the senses, but that many would remain caught by them, thinking that the good is identical with pleasure and pain with evil; others are more capable, he said, but they cannot turn their gaze upward, and so they devote themselves to the virtues of the practical life. But there is a third class of divine men of greater strength and keener insight, who can see and follow the gleam from above, so that they rise beyond the

<sup>1</sup> *Enn.* V, 1, and often.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita Plot.* 1 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Marc.* 32.

<sup>4</sup> *De abs.* I, 31.

mists of this world to their true and natural abode, like men returning to their native city after long wandering.<sup>1</sup>

The soul's final aim in its flight from evil Plotinus defines in Plato's words: it is likeness to God.<sup>2</sup> That is the sum of all virtue. But the master distinguishes grades and degrees of virtue in practice. There are the social virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, which serve to regulate the passions and help man to form right opinions. At this stage these cardinal virtues are related solely to external objects, and serve primarily to better man in his mundane activities. Next come those virtues which purify the soul from the pollution of the body, the activities which have nothing to do with the body but belong wholly to the soul; they are concerned with thought and reason. But in the highest range the virtues of the lower stages are no longer related to external objects, but have to do with the Intelligence (*Noûs*) alone. This is the contemplative life, man's highest activity, in which he becomes himself divine.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the Neoplatonist held that there is a still higher stage. When man's soul has mounted upward to Intelligence and lives the contemplative life, the space between Intelligence and God is yet unbridged. This gulf can only be crossed when the soul in ecstasy, forgetful of all thought and of self, rises to complete knowledge and union with the One.<sup>4</sup> This supreme privilege, according to Porphyry, was vouchsafed his master four times in

<sup>1</sup> *Enn.* V, 9, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Enn.* I, 2, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Enn.* I, 2, entire.

<sup>4</sup> *Enn.* VI, 9, 11.

the years in which he was his pupil; and once he too had seen the Beatific Vision.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Neoplatonism, the last stage of Greek philosophy, is no isolated or strange phenomenon. On its metaphysical side it is the consummation and final synthesis of the whole course of Greek thought from the sixth century to its own day; likewise in ethics it combined the views of its chief predecessors as its leaders understood them; and finally in the doctrine of the soul's union with God it only carried the mystical tendencies of previous centuries to their natural conclusion.

If time allowed, we might consider the way in which the Neoplatonists reconciled their theology with the polytheism and demonology of popular belief, but that would lead us too far; indeed it would take us away from our own proper subject and from the main interest of the great leaders of this school. They were most concerned with finding out and showing men the true path to the soul's peace and happiness, and we are chiefly interested in the history of their thought on this high theme. They found their object not in the exercise of the reason or the will alone, but in mysticism.

<sup>1</sup> Porph. *Vita Plot.* 23.



## VII

### THE VICTORY OF GREECE OVER ROME

**B**Y her victory at Zama in 202 B.C. Rome made her position as mistress of the western Mediterranean secure; and in the next century she extended her political dominion over Greece. But the same period saw captured Greece take her captor captive. Nor was this subjugation of the victor by the vanquished any sudden thing — in fact it had begun centuries earlier. The course of that conquest will be the main subject of the present lecture.

The story of the sale of the Sibylline Books to King Tarquin is familiar to all: how the Cumaean Sibyl brought to the King nine books of oracles; when he refused their purchase she went away and burned three, and offered the remaining six at the price she had originally demanded for the nine; upon his second refusal she burned three more, and then offered the last three on the original terms. Tradition says that her confidence in human curiosity was justified, and that Tarquin, after consultation with his seers, purchased the last three books.<sup>1</sup> Although we cannot today determine what historical truth lies behind this naïve story, the date of the reputed sale — the sixth century before our era — coincides with the first period of Greek influence at Rome certainly known to us.

<sup>1</sup> Dionys. Hal. IV, 62.

By their geographical position the early Romans were exposed to influences from two superior civilizations — the Etruscan at the north, the Greek in southern Italy. The Etruscans had entered Italy probably from the East at some time between the eleventh and the ninth centuries B.C.; but before their coming they had advanced in culture beyond the Latins whose territories they touched on the Tiber. By the sixth century certainly the Romans had come into close political and commercial relations with them, and indeed had already felt their power, for an Etruscan dynasty ruled at Rome. In spite of the patriotic efforts of Roman historians, we can now see that the Etruscan domination lasted long after the traditional expulsion of the kings. From their northern neighbors the Romans took many political and social institutions as well as certain religious elements. The most important of the latter were the College of the Haruspices, the Great Games in the Circus, the Triumph, and the Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, which was established by the Tarquins to strengthen their political position.

But far greater was the influence of the Greeks, whose colonies, firmly established, rich and prosperous, fringed the whole southern part of the Italian peninsula. From them the Romans got their alphabet, their weights and measures, and certain political institutions; but most important of all for our present interest, they received from them religious influences which finally so overlaid the early Roman religion that the Romans themselves could not well discover its original elements, and we are

hardly in a better situation. Furthermore, if we can believe that there is a kernel of historic truth in the story that King Tarquin the Proud sent an embassy to consult the oracle at Delphi, Rome was not wholly without connection with Greece proper in the sixth century before our era. We have then in Rome of the sixth and earlier centuries an example of a state whose rude civilization was brought into close and intensive contact with the higher civilizations about her. It was inevitable that the results should be rapid and profound.

Of Roman religion before it was influenced by the Greeks and the Etruscans we have comparatively little knowledge. Our literary sources for that period are late and fragmentary, and consist almost wholly of the speculations of the learned. But we have preserved in fragmentary form some twenty stone calendars, dating from the early empire. These calendars are not unlike that classic work known to us all, the *Old Farmer's Almanack*, in that they not only enumerate the days and the months, but also note religious festivals and great historic events. In all of them two styles of letters are employed. The larger letters in part indicate one class of religious festivals; other festivals and historical notices are inscribed in letters of smaller size. Theodor Mommsen was the first to see the meaning of this difference. He showed that the religious festivals recorded in the larger letters represented the earliest stage of Roman religion known to us.<sup>1</sup> Some forty-five fixed public festivals in the year's round are thus indicated.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 370 f. for an example of such a calendar.

We cannot now discover the character of a number of these, and the functions of some of the gods who belonged to that earliest stage were as obscure to the scholars of the time of Cicero as they are to us today. But we can determine the approximate date at which this earliest period of Roman religion closed, so to speak, for there is no mention in these entries of the triad of the Capitol — Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. As I have just said, tradition tells us that this group was introduced by the Tarquin dynasty in the first half of the sixth century before our era; so that the date that can be set for the close of this first stage of Roman religion is somewhere about 600–550 B.C.

An examination of the character of the earliest festivals shows the stage of civilization which had been attained by the Romans. Some thirteen or fourteen among those whose nature can be discovered had to do with agriculture, a few perhaps with grazing, a few others with war; certain ones were connected with the household and the cult of dead ancestors, or were the occasions on which special efforts were made to avert the baneful influences of the dead. The Romans then at this stage were a simple agricultural people, busy with their efforts to get a living from the soil with the aid of their flocks and herds, and engaged in armed conflicts with the neighbors. Their religion had little in it that showed the exercise of the imagination; it was confined rather to those elements which a life rooted in the ground, possessing no broad outlook, required. The heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, and the



operations of nature were not deified; and the social relations, which later furnished many abstract divinities, as yet had no place among the divine powers. Only those things which had to do with the Roman's daily life in his own neighborhood received his devotion.

Furthermore in this earliest stage the gods were hardly conceived anthropomorphically. Varro says that for the first hundred and seventy years of Roman history the Romans did not represent their gods by statues. According to his chronology this brings us to the founding of the Capitoline temple in which the Etruscan triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva were worshipped. In general we may say that his statement is true, for the Romans were in the aniconic stage until they learned from their neighbors to represent their divinities by images in human form. In this primitive period the Roman thought of his gods not as individuals but as powers (*numina*), resident in and associated with departments. This is an idea extremely difficult for us to grasp with our sophisticated minds. To the early Roman Janus, for example, was not the god of the door or the threshold, he was the door or the threshold—not simply resident in it, but not even distinguished from the object itself. So Vesta was the fire on the hearth; Saturn was the sown grain; Ceres the growing grain; Flora the blossoming flower; Fons the spring of water; and so on. The circle of such powers could never be closed, as the number of departments in which divine powers might reside was indefinite. Yet even in this early stage certain *numina* were regarded as more



prominent than others. At the head of the list stood Janus, the numen of the door or passage, whose importance was such that still in later times his priest, the *rex sacrorum*, took precedence of all others, and prayers began with an appeal to him. Jupiter was the god of the sky and of all the phenomena that seem to have their origin there; Juno the feminine counterpart of Jove; Mars the god of war and protector of the land; Quirinus a similar divinity, belonging originally perhaps to a separate settlement on the Quirinal Hill. The list closed with Vesta, the goddess of the hearthfire, with whose name the ancient litanies always ended. These were the great gods of the period before Greek influence came. Yet in this earliest time the divinities had little, if any, personality in our sense of the word. They were simply powers. Personalities and anthropomorphic forms they acquired under the influence of the Greeks, who had left the primitive stage many centuries behind them and had long represented their divinities in human shape.

The religion of the early Romans was at once both simple and elaborate. There were no temples in the later sense; no cult images of the gods. But religion was thought to consist primarily in the employment of a scrupulous care in all dealings with the divine powers, that is to say the ritual had to be exactly performed so that the numina might be forced, if need be, to perform the things the suppliant desired. Such a concept naturally led to the development even in this earliest time of an elaborate ritual, on the exact performance of

which all depended. This character Roman religion maintained to the end. So fixed was the ritual that the ancient litanies could not be changed. We have still preserved the songs of the Arval Brothers and of the Salii, which are of such primitive form that in the historical period they were largely unintelligible to those who sang them; yet no syllable of the venerable formulae might be varied. Furthermore religion was regarded as a state affair. It was by state action that certain gods had been recognized and given a kind of citizenship; no others therefore were of concern to the Romans unless the state adopted them also by formal decree. The state likewise determined where and when worship should be carried on. These legislative enactments, according to tradition, had followed the actual establishment of the state by Romulus; and in the historical period the establishment of the religious organization of a colony, for example, was regularly subsequent to the political. In fact the Romans said that the earliest religious system had been established by King Numa, as the political system had been made by Romulus, for they had a natural tendency to regard their institutions as the creations of individuals. The historical significance of this belief for us is that the "religion of Numa" marked the earliest stage of which the Romans were conscious. It is that indicated in the calendars by the entries in large letters.

The Romans further thought of their religion as a contract between the state and its gods. This view comes out clearly in the vows made at the beginning of

the year or of a campaign. At such seasons the king, and later the consuls or other officials, promised that if the divine powers should prosper them against their foes and should grant them abundant harvests, increase of the crops and herds, then the state, when the gods had done their part, would in its turn pay the price promised in the form of votive gifts and sacrifices. Livy furnishes us many illustrations. For example, in a crisis during the struggle with the Samnites the Roman leader prayed thus to the goddess of war: "Bellona, if thou wilt today grant us victory, then I promise thee a temple."<sup>1</sup> Another is the vow made near the beginning of the Second Punic War: "If the state of the Roman People, the Quirites, shall be preserved, as I would have it preserved, for the next five years in these wars — the war which the Roman People is carrying on with the Carthaginians and the wars which they have with the Gauls who live this side the Alps, — then the Roman People, the Quirites, will give a gift, etc."; a long list of the offerings to be made follows.<sup>2</sup>

In this first period the religion of the family also was already fixed in the form which it retained to the end of antiquity. Vesta of the hearth-fire, the Penates of the larder, the Lar of the farm, the Genius of the pater familias, were the divine powers which were worshipped in the house. Rites were paid also to the Manes, the shades of the dead. As within the home the head of the family naturally performed the priestly offices, so in the state during the regal period the king was chief priest.

<sup>1</sup> 296 B.C., Livy X, 19, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Livy XXII, 10, 2 ff.

Advisers and assistants were given him, who with the organization of the republic acquired an independent position, so that thereafter the Pontifex Maximus and his associates, who formed the College of the Pontifices, were at the head of the state religion. Although it is impossible here to go into the details of the Roman priesthoods, it is important to note that these priestly offices were state magistracies just as much as the offices of consul and praetor, and that with a few exceptions priestly office never debarred its holder from performing any other political function. The Roman state was not burdened with sacerdotalism.

Now this early religion of which I have been giving a brief summary was the religion of a little city-state; it was suited to a small, unimaginative community. As such it remained formal and practical — a religion intended to secure material blessings; but it lacked all spiritual elements, and offered little or nothing to satisfy man's natural hope for a happy future life. More than this, it contained little to ennoble daily life, save as it taught the lesson of duty and of fidelity towards the gods in the performance of contracts agreed upon. Yet it was not an uncomfortable religion for unreflective men, winning their existence from the soil and gaining their wealth from crops, their power through war. It did not, however, have in it the possibility of satisfying men's higher desires.

Under the influence of the Greeks and the Etruscans the Hellenic gods were early introduced to Rome. The temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline, which the Tarquin



kings apparently built to establish a new religious center associated with their own dynasty, housed Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva; but they were only the Greek gods Zeus, Hera, and Athena, who had travelled to Rome by way of Etruria. In this temple the gods were represented in human form, and thereafter the process of anthropomorphizing and individualizing the divinities must have gone on apace. Some gods came by migration and trade, like the Greek Castor and Pollux, who were introduced to Rome from the neighboring town of Tusculum, and Hercules, whom Greek immigrants had established at Tibur. But the greatest influence in introducing Greek gods was the Sibylline Books. Whenever need pressed the state, these books were consulted that they might indicate what new means should be employed to win divine aid. We can name at least ten Greek divinities who were thus brought in before the outbreak of the Second Punic War. Apollo must have come at the time of the acquisition of the Sibylline Books, or soon after, for the Books were believed to contain his directions; we know that he had a temple by 433 B.C. Under the name of the Italian divinity Mercury, the Greek Hermes had received a shrine in 495; two years later the triad Ceres, Liber, and Libera, an Italian disguise for Demeter, Dionysus, and Kore, were domiciled near Mercury; and not long before 399 B.C. the Greek Poseidon, with the name of Neptunus, was established near the city walls. Then there was apparently a pause for about a century. But in 293 B.C. a serious plague ravaged the city, so that the



Sibylline Books were consulted. This time they were found to say that relief was certain if the Greek god of healing, Aesculapius, were brought to Rome. The divinity consented, and two years later a temple was dedicated to him on the island in the Tiber where the hospital of San Bartolomeo today continues his kindly work. Again in the crisis of the year 249 B.C., warned by many omens, the Romans obeyed the Books' injunction to establish on the Campus Martius a festival to the Greek Pluto and Persephone under the names Dispater and Proserpina. This festival was to be renewed every saeculum, and ultimately became the festival which Augustus celebrated with such magnificence in 17 B.C. Finally in 238 B.C. the Greek Aphrodite was adopted under the Italian name Flora. You will observe that most of the Greek gods were identified with Roman or Italian divinities long familiar to the Romans; but in every case sooner or later the Greek god so completely overshadowed his Italian counterpart that the Italian lost his identity in the Greek. Besides these divinities that I have named the popular mind identified many others, and in the end a large part of the Greek pantheon crept into the Roman system. The temple for Jupiter and his associates, Juno and Minerva, had been built on the Capitoline Hill in the Etruscan style and the three gods were represented by Etruscan terra-cotta images; but the homes of the Greek divinities were erected in the Greek style by Greek architects, and the statues of the divinities were copies of statues in Greek cities. These set models for the representation of other

gods. We can readily understand how men's concepts of their gods were profoundly influenced by their artistic representations.

The introduction of these Greek gods is probably to be connected with the political struggles of the two centuries between 500 and 300 B.C. At the beginning of the Republic the patricians were the only ones who had considerable political rights or who enjoyed the privileges of the state religion, whereas the plebeians were struggling to secure admission to both political and priestly offices; and during these two centuries the humbler class found religious satisfaction in the worship of these new gods, whose rites were public, open to all, and not restricted to the privileged citizens, as were the rites of the older divinities. In 367/6 B.C., the plebeians secured admission to the consulate and to the College of Ten who had charge of the Sibylline Books, and by the year 300 they had obtained a right to all important political offices, including practically all the priesthoods. A social significance also attached to the temples of these new gods: that of Mercury, the god of trade, became the resort of the guild of merchants; the temple of Minerva on the Aventine the center for the various guilds of craftsmen, including that of poets. Along with the Greek gods had come also the Greek ritual. The Hellenization of Roman religion may be said to have been completed by the year 217 B.C. when, as ordered by the Sibylline Books, at the great festival of the lectisternium twelve gods were represented as sharing a sacred meal with the people; these twelve gods

were Greek divinities, although all but Apollo were called by Roman names: Jupiter and Juno, Neptune and Minerva, Mars and Venus, Apollo and Diana, Vulcanus and Vesta, Mercury and Ceres.<sup>1</sup> While the practical character of Roman religion still remained, the Romans' concept of the gods themselves, as well as much of the ritual, had been profoundly altered.

In other fields as well Greece began her conquest of Rome before Rome entered on her political subjugation of Greece. An educated young Greek, taken captive at the fall of Tarentum in the year 272 B.C., became the teacher of his master's children at Rome; when set free, he continued his profession under the name of Livius Andronicus. There was, however, no Roman literature available, so that he had to supply this lack by translating the *Odyssey* into the rude Saturnian verse current in the mouths of the Latins. In the year 240 B.C. he presented a tragedy and a comedy adapted from Greek originals, and thus through epic and dramatic poetry he became the founder of Latin literature.

We must realize that at this time the only literature existing was the Greek, which in its unexampled history of six centuries and more had originated and perfected almost every major literary form since known. It was inevitable that Andronicus and his successors should turn to the Greek for their models and that the early drama should largely consist of adaptations, chiefly from the cosmopolitan comedy of Greece. That this was possible and natural shows in part how common

<sup>1</sup> Livy XXII, 10, 9.

knowledge of the Greek language and of Greek customs was already in Rome of the third and second centuries before our era. Now these adapted plays, both tragedies and comedies, had a share in breaking down the older religious and social strictness, as we can easily see from the extant comedies of Plautus and of Terence. These prove beyond question that the later Greek drama, when adapted for Roman audiences, must have had a considerable influence upon Roman religion and Roman society. The gods are intentionally held up to ridicule; they are represented as being more immoral and baser than common men; nor is the human society which is presented in these plays an edifying spectacle. Although we should not attribute too great influence in such matters to the stage, there is no possible question that the theatre had its effect then, as it has its influence now.

At the close of the third century before our era native epic poetry began under the influence naturally of the Homeric epics. Naeivius, who flourished during the Second Punic War, wrote a narrative poem, the *Bellum Punicum*, in the native Saturnian measure — a poem which enjoyed great success and continued to be read in Horace's day. In it he popularized among the Romans a simple form of the legend of Rome's connection with Troy, which is familiar to us from Virgil and Livy. His successor in this field was Ennius, who died in 169 B.C. He boldly adopted the Greek hexameter for his poetic history of Rome, the *Annales*, and moulded the Latin language to this measure so successfully that thereafter this remained the metre for the Roman



epic. From Naevius and Ennius through Virgil to the end of the fourth Christian century, when Claudian closed the long line of classical Latin poets, every one drew his form, his imagery, and many of his incidents from the Greek epics.

The splendid results of the Second Punic War, made the more glorious by the long years of doubt and disaster, stirred the Romans to a desire to record their national history in prose form. But the only prose that had been developed for this purpose was Greek; therefore the Roman historians wrote in that language for half a century until Cato the Censor set the fashion of writing in Latin prose. So we might go on and point out how in oratory, lyric poetry, elegy, and in almost every other form of literature the Greeks were the direct models for the Romans, as in a way they have been for the literatures of all peoples since. Furthermore in poetry, history, and indeed in all classes of literature, Greek myths and legends were adopted or worked over to fit new conditions, tales and genealogies invented on Greek models, and everywhere the Greek gods were given Latin names and adapted to their new environment. The disastrous result for the indigenous religion is self-evident.

During the third and second centuries education came to mean first of all the study of the Greek language and literature. I have just spoken of some of the evidence we possess which shows that Greek was early widely known among all classes at Rome. By the Second Punic War it became customary in well-to-do and noble



families to employ a private teacher (*grammaticus*) within the house to give instruction in the Greek language and literature; in the middle of the second century B.C., with the growth of a wider interest in the formal study of Greek literature, schools arose in which the *grammatici* taught a considerable number of pupils together. The Greek authors studied were first of all Homer, and then the great tragedians; among the writers of comedy Menander was the favorite; the fables of Aesop and lyric poetry also found their place. Modelled on this Greek curriculum was the study of Latin literature — Livius Andronicus, Ennius, with selections from the Roman writers of tragedy and comedy. In due season Virgil and Horace occupied the first rank. Furthermore not far from the beginning of the last century before our era Greek rhetoricians began formal instruction at Rome, and they continued to hold the field against Latin rhetoricians throughout antiquity. We see therefore that all education of every grade from the time of the Second Punic War was either Greek or modelled directly on the Greek. By it the Latin tongue was refined and perfected; but more significant for us at the present moment is the fact that thereby Latin society was made familiar with Greek social, philosophic, and religious ideas so far as they were represented in Greek literature.

I have earlier said that the temples of the Greek gods at Rome were built in Greek style by Greek architects, and that the images of the gods within were copies of famous Greek works of art. By these the Romans' ideas

as to the personality of their divinities were fixed in the Greek concepts. As Rome extended her conquests over Greek lands, first in southern Italy and Sicily, and then in Greece proper, she acquired as part of the spoils of war great treasures of Greek sculpture and painting; the number of statues and other works of art which were brought home by Mummius alone after the destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C. can hardly be estimated. A large number of them represented the gods, and intensified the process of Hellenization with which we are now concerned, for the statues and other representations of Cronos, Zeus, Hera, Ares, and Athena readily represented Saturn, Jupiter, Juno, Mars, and Minerva. In cases where the similarity was not so close, the nearest Greek analogy was selected; if none was satisfactory, still the best was made of the case, as when the Greek representations of the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, came to do service for the Lares Praestites. Among the spoils of war were many Greek paintings, for which mythological scenes were favorite subjects, and such frequently represented the baser, sensual side of traditional religion. The effect on the ignorant was to give them a lower concept of divinity; the intellectual classes were disgusted with the gods of such a sort and rejected them.

But the most potent influence that came from Greece to Rome was naturally philosophy. We cannot fix any date for the introduction of Greek philosophic thought at Rome, yet it certainly became influential soon after the close of the Second Punic War. We have already

seen that long before this time the Greek philosophic systems were highly developed and had done much to drive the traditional gods from their high places. It was inevitable that these philosophies should have a swift effect when they once became known to the newly Hellenized Roman society of the second century B.C. The poet Ennius, who belonged to the first half of that century, was a man of strong religious bent and moral convictions, and he heartily scorned the superstitious notions of his day. He had been already influenced by Epicurean scepticism with regard to the existence of the gods, and the following words, spoken by Teucer in one of his tragedies, may well have represented his own view: "I have always said, and I shall always say, that the gods of heaven exist, but I believe that they have no care for what the race of man does. For if they had such care, it would be well with the good and ill with the wicked; which is not the case now."<sup>1</sup> It is the ancient difficulty of justifying the ways of God to men. Ennius adopted the easy solution by denial, which he had already learned from Epicureanism.

The same poet also translated and made known to the Romans the Sacred History of Euhemerus. This was a romantic tale written in the third century before our era in which the author told of an imaginary voyage which he had made from Arabia to the island Panchaea in the Indian Ocean; there he found inscribed on a column the history of the supposed gods Uranus, Cronos, and Zeus, and learned that they and the other gods and

<sup>1</sup> *Scen.* 316 ff., Vahlen.

heroes had been originally historical persons who were raised to their high position because of the services they had rendered mankind. This Sacred History was an interesting example of the rationalizing tendency of the age that produced it; its effect upon the Roman, whose belief in the traditional religion was already shaken, we can readily understand. Unquestionably Ennius' work and the plays of the comedians hastened the work of unbelief, although they were only two of many factors that contributed to the ultimate result.

The first half of this same second century was also a time of religious unrest. Whatever may have been the reason, whether the common longing for mystic assurance of safety and salvation had come naturally to the front in the Roman and Italian mind, or whether the large number of Greeks, slaves, traders, and other members of the lower and immigrant classes had moved the natives by mystic practices which they had brought with them, certain it is that a considerable part of the Romans found no satisfaction for their deeper longings in the traditional religion, and turned to a form of the Greek mysteries.<sup>1</sup> The mysteries of Bacchus which had gradually made their way up the peninsula from the Greek cities of the south led to such excesses in 186 B.C. that the Roman senate felt obliged to adopt stern measures; yet it is significant that it did not dare to forbid the celebration of these mysteries, but attempted only to control them. The Bacchic mysteries offered essentially the same religious satisfaction that the great

<sup>1</sup> Livy XXXIX, 8 ff.



mysteries at Eleusis did. Their influence at this time in Italy shows how conscious men had become of larger religious desires and how little the current forms of religion satisfied them. The conservatives in the state abhorred the Bacchic rites and would have no more part in them than in philosophy, towards which they showed an amusing timidity. Five years after the regulation of the mysteries an attempt was made to introduce at Rome some philosophic books which were generally regarded as subversive in their tendencies. The method of their introduction was the same one which has been used many times for similar purposes. Some farmers plowing in their fields at the foot of the Janiculum found two stone chests or coffins with inscriptions upon them in both Latin and Greek, saying that in one King Numa Pompilius had been buried, and that in the other were the books of the sacred law established by him. On opening the sarcophagi it was discovered that the body of the king had disappeared, but in the second chest were found two rolls of seven books each; one set was in Latin and treated of the pontifical law, the other, in Greek, dealt with Greek philosophy — tradition said it was the philosophy of Pythagoras. After solemn deliberation by the officials it was found that these books tended to destroy religion, and a timid senate ordered them to be publicly burned.<sup>1</sup> Again about 173 B.C., the senate required the Epicurean philosophers, Alcius and Philiscus, to leave the state;<sup>2</sup> and once more

<sup>1</sup> Livy XL, 29; Plin. *N. H.* XIII, 84 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Athen. XII, 547 A; Aelian *V. H.* IX, 12.



in 161 it passed a vote banishing the Greek philosophers and rhetoricians.<sup>1</sup> In 156/5 an embassy from Athens included the Peripatetic philosopher Critolaus, the Academic Carneades, and the Stoic Diogenes, who during their stay at Rome exhibited their skill in disputation and their eloquence in speeches before the people. The populace was charmed, but old fashioned people were horrified at such exhibitions. Cato the Censor was so shocked that he moved in the senate that the Roman youth should not be allowed to listen to such teachings.<sup>2</sup> But it was too late; philosophers might be driven from the state, but philosophy had found a foothold at Rome.

The two schools that made the strongest appeal to the Romans at the end of the Republic were Epicureanism and Stoicism. The former had wide influence until the first century of our era, chiefly because its agnosticism, or rather its denial of the existence of any future life, offered a refuge from the uncertainty which prevailed now that the old beliefs were broken up and men, harrassed by political disorders, had not yet found an abiding place in any positive philosophy. The Epicureans did not deny the existence of gods, it is true, but they declared that the gods, if they existed, must dwell in some remote place in the upper ether in eternal sunshine, undisturbed by any care for mortals. They explained the universe by a resort to the atomistic materialism of Democritus, a philosopher of the late

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *de rhet.* 1; Aul. Gell. XV, 11, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *N. H.* VII, 112; Plut. *C. M.* 22.

fifth century. Their religious aim, if we may so define it, was to free men from the terror which their superstitious beliefs in the gods and in future punishment brought upon them. No writer sets this forth with greater genius or with greater passion than Lucretius, the contemporary of Cicero. His six books are devoted to an explanation of the universe and its phenomena, of the nature of man, and of the impossibility of immortality. This splendid poem furnishes us the best proof that in that day the mass of men still believed in immortality and longed for an assurance that their belief was not in vain.

In practical ethics the Epicureans did not differ much from the other systems of their time. They taught that happiness must be found in the avoidance of pain, and that inasmuch as some pleasures have painful results they were to be rejected, as some pains were to be accepted, for they were followed by pleasure; and they held that in self-control and choice lay the means by which man could attain to his goal, which was *ἀταξία*, complete repose of the mind. So the Epicurean tried to reach an end similar to that of the Stoic, although his premises were somewhat different. Epicureanism made a natural appeal to men in a time like the last century and a half of the Republic, when the ancient confidence in the state religion was gone, when the simplicity of the earlier centuries had been replaced by a more elaborate method of living, made possible through the rapid increase of wealth, and when in every department of Roman life rapid changes were taking place.

Yet for various reasons Epicureanism gradually lost its hold. It may be that the passivity which it engendered failed to make a lasting appeal to the Roman mind, or more probably other philosophies may have offered more attractive means of attaining the same goal of happiness. At any rate, as I pointed out in an earlier lecture, the Roman temperament had an especial leaning towards Stoicism. I there spoke of the introduction of Stoicism at Rome by Panaetius during the second century B.C., and I sketched the tendencies of his system so far as popular religion was concerned. It was probably Panaetius who was responsible for that three-fold theology which was set forth by the famous Scaevola, who declared that there were three classes of gods — those of the poets, those of the statesmen, and those of the philosophers. The mythical theology of the poets, he said, was full of absurd and degrading stories unworthy of the attention of men; the religion of the state was nothing but a wise device, a useful convention adopted by statesmen as suited to the necessities of the political organism; but the theology of the intelligent man, the philosopher, was alone true, yet naturally it was beyond the power of the common man to grasp. Such was the attitude of the most famous jurist and the head of the state religion at the beginning of the last century before our era.<sup>1</sup> A little later Varro, the famous polyhistor, in writing of the gods and religion in his great Encyclopedia of Roman Antiquities, made a similar distinction between theologies and

<sup>1</sup> Augustin. *Civ. Dei* IV, 27.

showed throughout his treatment the pantheistic influence of the Stoic philosophy. In his works he was the first fully to combine the mythological traditions with the philosophic doctrines which the Romans had been learning for over a century.

Yet the Epicurean and the Stoic schools were not the only ones which numbered adherents among the Romans. The representatives of the later Academy, Philo of Larissa and Antiochus of Ascalon, had many pupils. Cicero, Atticus, Brutus, and Varro had all heard the latter lecture at Athens. But the teachings of Plato had been greatly modified, inasmuch as these later Academicians had adopted the greater part of Stoicism into their philosophy. Furthermore the sceptical tendency which is so clearly marked among the Sophists of the fifth century had gradually developed during the fourth and third centuries into something like a philosophic system. The Sceptics, however, can hardly be called a school; they included those men in the various schools who doubted the possibility of attaining to absolute knowledge. Among the Romans they had close affinity with the tenets of the later Academicians on the one hand and with Stoic doctrines on the other. But their keen consciousness of the limitations of human knowledge made them also a factor in producing a certain agnosticism among the educated. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Romans were plain men, not given to speculation, with a fondness for the concrete rather than the abstract. They naturally selected from the various philosophies the elements



which appealed to their practical sense, and which fortified them to meet the burdens and responsibilities of their daily life. On the whole Stoicism did this service more than any other of the current systems, and in the end, as we have already seen, Stoicism became the chief philosophy under the early Empire. The Stoics' interest in grammar and logic also appealed to the legal character of the Roman mind; their system of duties, which were to be met unflinchingly, accorded with the Roman temper, and their cosmopolitan view found favor with a people that were masters of the greater part of the known world. But whatever the system of philosophy or selection of philosophic doctrines the Roman adopted, he found therein no warrant for a belief in the state religion. Philosophy could go no further than it did with Scaevola and Varro. The traditional religion was abandoned by the intellectual Romans; they substituted for it either agnosticism, some form of moral philosophy, or a pantheistic concept of the world. In truth the conquest of Greece over Rome was complete: in literature, art, philosophy, and religion captured Greece had taken her captor captive; by the beginning of our era Greek thought had penetrated to all the great centers of the Roman Empire, and under that long peace, which with comparatively few interruptions lasted for two centuries after the battle for Actium, philosophy and many new religions, including Christianity, travelled the great Roman roads from one end of the ancient world to the other.



The last century of the Republic from the time of the Gracchi to the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. was not only a period of religious change but also a time of political decay. The strength of the Republic was so far gone that democratic government no longer existed, and the rule fell into the hands of political leaders. However much the Gracchi may have been inspired by public spirit and high purpose, they set in motion a train of events that was destined to result in the loss of all public liberty and in the foundation of the Empire. The history of this last century must be read in the history of individuals — Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus; Saturninus; Marius, Cinna, and Sulla; Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus; Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus. These were the political bosses who for good or ill led the state and combined for its control. From the day that Caesar crossed the Rubicon in January 49 to the battle of Actium in September 31 B.C., Italy and many other lands around the Mediterranean were harassed almost continuously by civil war. The Italian peninsula never fully recovered from the disasters of this time. Even with the horrors of the Great War fresh in mind, we in this land can hardly picture to ourselves either these disasters or the joy with which the majority of the inhabitants of the Roman world hailed the *pax Romana* which the Emperor Augustus established. With peace came a revival of trade and a return of prosperity, to which eloquent witness is given by Virgil and Horace.

The founder of the Empire, Augustus, attempted to revive the old state religion and to introduce certain

modifications to the advantage of his own position. In this he was aided by the sense of dissatisfaction which the preceding disasters had increased, and by that inherent belief which always seems to persist, even in times of great religious doubt, that somehow the prosperity of the state is inseparably connected with the rites of religion. Under his direction temples were rebuilt, old priesthoods reestablished, and the ancient ritual performed with a magnificence that men had never before seen. He also magnified the worship of Apollo and of Apollo's sister Diana; the former god in fact he regarded as his patron divinity, and three years after his victory at Actium he dedicated a magnificent temple to him on the Palatine. But the new worship of Apollo did not attain to the supreme position to which Augustus apparently wished to raise it, and his efforts to recall the old state religion could not bring back men's belief, although they could restore its practices. Indeed we must bear in mind that the traditional worship of the greater Roman gods continued to exist to the end of antiquity, in spite of the fact that it had lost its vitality centuries before its final downfall.

One important and permanent contribution to religion Augustus did make: as early as the year 42 B.C., the masterful youth had forced an unwilling senate to declare Julius Caesar divine; thereby he established the worship of the deified emperors — a cult which was to last nearly four centuries. The significance for us of this worship of the emperor lies in the fact that now for the first time there was introduced into the entire

civilized world a common religion. From the remotest East to the farthest West, from the Gauls in the north to the edge of the Great Desert on the south, temples to the deified emperors had been erected before a century of the Empire had passed, and these did much to accustom men to the idea of one common worship for the whole world.

Thus far we have been considering almost wholly those forces which were operating in the Roman world first to obscure the original Roman religion and finally to break down faith in that traditional religion which had resulted from the victory of the gods of Greece over those of Rome. Yet the age of Augustus was far from being irreligious. Of the truth of this statement Virgil alone would be sufficient witness if all others were lacking, for the *Aeneid* owed its immediate popularity and its permanent high place, not only to the unmatched expression which it gave to Roman imperialism, but also to its religious tone, which the poet's contemporaries and their successors found partly in Virgil's exact knowledge of Roman ritual and felt still more in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, where the current beliefs in a future life with rewards and punishments were set forth in combination with impressive prophecy after the event; all was planned and combined in such a way as to make a strong appeal to the Romans' national pride and religious sense alike. Moreover under the Empire positive elements tending to elevate religious thought and to purify morals were not lacking. On many of

these we have already touched in our last lecture, for they were largely to be found in philosophy, one of the greatest gifts which Greece gave to her conqueror. Even at the risk of repetition, we shall now consider briefly some of these constructive forces.

Although Epicureanism taught that man's highest good was pleasure, it was far from being a thorough-going hedonism, as I pointed out a little while ago. On the contrary its founder taught that the pleasures of the mind were superior to those of the body, and that the cardinal virtue of man was correct insight, that is to say, wisdom, virtue, and justice; and that these three factors — wisdom, virtue, and justice — were necessary for a pleasant life.<sup>1</sup> Such doctrine as this does not properly make for religion, but it does contribute to the welfare and comfort of society. Epicureanism was the most quietistic of the later philosophic schools and so was well adapted to the conditions of the later Republic and the early Empire. We have seen how Pythagoreanism in its revival had something approaching the Christian cult of the Saints, and made sanctity an ideal of human life as well as an object of admiration. Platonism never lost its own religious fervor and missionary zeal, but had indeed communicated them to most of the eclectic later schools. Yet of all the schools perhaps Stoicism made the largest contribution directly to the moral and indirectly to the religious life of the first two centuries of our era.

The Stoic, like the Cynic, his doctrinaire and less effective intellectual cousin, at this time conceived of

<sup>1</sup> Epic., p. 72 Usener. Cf. p. 59, and frg. 506.



his task as that of a missionary to a lost world; he was a director of men's souls. Speculation was by most regarded as unpractical and useless, save as it might help to elevate men's minds and so contribute to their moral edification. Many of the aristocracy, whose wealth furnished only a splendid cloak for the disorder of their souls within, had in their houses philosophers who served as confessors and private chaplains — physicians to the soul. Such was Seneca, to whose real significance and merit we must not be blinded either by his own weakness or by the monstrosity of the emperor whose minister he was. He was a spiritual director, a confessor, and a guide to many of the aristocracy. His correspondence shows how he endeavored to build up his friends in virtue and moral strength, not by theoretical speculation as to the nature of virtue, but by wise instructions as to the practice of a virtuous life. Epictetus on the other hand was more of a preacher to the masses. Arrian occasionally gives us the dramatic setting of his master's discourses, as for example: "When a man asked his advice as to the way in which he could persuade his brother to be no longer angry at him, Epictetus said," etc.<sup>1</sup> These words show that the text of Epictetus' sermons might often be furnished by the question of an individual, but the sermons themselves make it clear that any one who wished might hear the teacher. Seneca and Epictetus are simply the two examples best known to us of the philosophic director and the missionary, but it is clear that there were many

<sup>1</sup> *Diss.* I, 15, 1.



of both classes. Their essential moral and religious teachings were in practical accord.

What were some of the supports and satisfactions which Stoicism offered serious men in the disordered political and social world of the early Empire? First of all, it laid stress on conduct and frankly proposed to give rules by which men could attain to the peace they sought. Both Seneca and Epictetus inculcated daily self-examination, and this practice was not the habit of their school alone. The eclectic Sextius, who belonged to the generation before Seneca, at the end of each day asked his soul: "What fault of yours have you cured today? What vice resisted? In what way are you a better man?" Seneca himself found the same practice helpful; he would say to himself: "In that discussion you spoke with too much warmth. Do not engage again with the ignorant, for they who have never learned do not wish to learn."<sup>1</sup> Epictetus quoted from the "Golden Words" of Pythagoras and reminded his hearers that the verses were not for recitation but for use: "Never let sleep come to thy languid eyes e'er thou hast considered each act of the day. 'Where have I slipped?' 'What done, what failed to do?' Begin thus and go through all; and then chide thyself for thy shameful acts, rejoice over thy good."<sup>2</sup> Such a searching of one's daily acts Epictetus regarded as an essential exercise to prepare and train a man to meet the vicissitudes of life. In the discourse in which he quotes these Pythagorean verses, he continues with the question:

<sup>1</sup> Sen. *de Ira* III, 36, 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Epict. *Diss.* III, 10, 2.

"What is philosophy?" "Is it not a preparation against things which may happen to a man?" He argues that a man who throws away the patience which philosophy teaches him is like an athlete who because of the blows he receives wishes to withdraw from the pancratium — still worse than he, for the athlete may avoid his contest and escape the blows; but no man can escape the buffetings of life. Therefore the preacher says that to give up philosophy is to abandon the one resource against misfortune, the only source of happiness and courage.

The pagan missionary no less than the Christian apostle to the Gentiles regarded life as a battle to be fought and a race to be run. Epictetus often compared human life to a warfare; he said that men were assigned their several places and duties in this world, just as in an army one man is obliged to stand watch, another to spy, and a third to fight, each doing his part in the place in which the great general, God, had set him, — a figure which Socrates had used five centuries earlier in his defence before his judges. In accord with this view of life as a battle or an athletic contest, the philosophers laid much weight on training. Seneca and Epictetus both exhorted their pupils to exercise themselves in the means whereby they could meet misfortune or be ready to perform any duty which the changes of life might bring them. The latter had a discourse "On Exercise," which was apparently a favorite theme for all Stoic preachers.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this exercise was to train

<sup>1</sup> *Diss.* III, 12.

the individual in right abstentions and the proper use of his desires, so that he would be always obedient to reason and do nothing out of season or place — in short to make him an adept in living so that he could manage his usual life with adroit uprightness and meet the sudden changes of fortune undismayed. In another discourse Epictetus pointed out that the misfortunes of life were tests sent by God to prove the individual's fidelity in training; "God says to you, 'Give me proof if you have duly practised athletics, if you have eaten what you should, if you have exercised, if you have obeyed the trainer.' And then will you show yourself weak when the time for action comes? Now is the time for a fever. Bear it well. Now the time for thirst. Endure thy thirst well." <sup>1</sup>

In my last lecture I spoke of the doctrine of constant advance in virtue which these later moral teachers magnified. Stoicism had come to recognize the facts of human life and in practice had abandoned the older doctrine of the sudden and complete perfection of man by philosophy. Seneca's honest words I must quote again: "I am not yet wise, nor shall I ever be. Do not ask me to be equal to the best but rather to be better than the base. This is enough for me — to take away daily something from my faults and daily to rebuke my errors. I have not attained complete moral health, nor shall I ever attain it." <sup>2</sup> It is unnecessary to point out that such teaching as is given in these words was far more tonic than the uncompromising doctrine of an

<sup>1</sup> *Diss.* III, 10, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *De vita beata* 17.

earlier day, for progress in virtue each man could feel was within his power; sudden perfection he knew was beyond the strength of any man. Furthermore the philosophers gave detailed injunctions as to the ways in which one could further his moral progress, as for example when Seneca, following Epicurus, advised Lucilius to select some person of noble character like a Cato, a Scipio, or a Laelius, and to imagine that he was always present, watching and judging the novice's every act; then when he had advanced to the point where his self-respect was sufficient to keep him from wrong-doing, he could dismiss his guardian.<sup>1</sup> But if Seneca recognized the limitations of human nature, he still kept clearly in view the ultimate goal of man's effort — that perfection of the individual which according to the Stoic was attained when his reason was harmoniously developed and had become supreme.<sup>2</sup> Then man was to be wholly independent, happy, and serene; his mind would be like that of God.

Self-examination, self-training, daily advance in virtue, ultimate calm and peace — these were the moral habits and the attainable goals which the later Stoics tried to teach their age. Moreover the Stoic doctrine of the community between the divine and the human reason gave a dignity to man; cut off from activity in the political world he realized that he was dwelling in a world in which God and men were the citizens, that he shared in that divine polity, free in the freedom which his relationship to God gave him. Between man and

<sup>1</sup> *Epist.* 11, 8-10; 25, 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Epist.* 41, 8; 92, 2 f.; and often.



God for the Stoic there was no gulf fixed; on the contrary as Seneca wrote his younger friend: "God is near you, with you, within you. This I say, Lucilius: a holy spirit sits within us, watcher of our good and evil deeds, and guardian over us. Even as we treat him, he treats us. No man is good without God. Can any one rise superior to fortune save with God's help?"<sup>1</sup> A nobler concept of the worship of the gods and of man's duty toward them arose: not by the lighting of lamps, the giving of gifts, the slaying of bullocks, or visitations to the temples were the gods to be worshipped, but by a recognition of their true nature and goodness, by rendering to them again their perfect justice, and by ascribing to them constant praise.<sup>2</sup> In the contemplation of God alone and in loving obedience to his commands lay the means of freeing the mind from sorrow, fear, desire, envy, avarice, and every base thought, and of securing that peace which no Caesar but only God could give.<sup>3</sup>

A belief in the goodness of God and the perfection of his works made the Stoic naturally regard this world as the best of all possible worlds, and urge men to accommodate themselves to the natural order, in which he saw the perfect product of the supreme reason. He could not think that the world was out of joint, but he believed that all was perfect harmony for one who would set himself in tune with the universe. So Marcus Aurelius

<sup>1</sup> *Epist.* 41, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca *Epist.* 95, 47-50; 115, 5. *Epict. Diss.* I, 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Epict. Diss.* II, 16, 45-47; III, 13, 9 ff.



wrote: "Everything is harmonious to me that is harmonious to thee, O Universe; nothing is too early or too late for me that is in due time for thee. Everything is fruit to me that thy seasons bring, O Nature; from thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee all things return. 'Beloved city of Cecrops,' sings the poet: Shall I not say, 'O beloved city of God?' " <sup>1</sup> It is easy to understand from passages like this how stabilizing and how ennobling later Stoicism was. To reverence God, to do nothing that God would not approve, to think ever of God, and to trust in the harmonious purpose of the universe was the Emperor's constant exhortation to himself. With this purpose was associated a similar desire to help his fellowmen; and yet in spite of the Emperor's religious devotion and sympathetic interest in humanity, in spite of the exaltation of spirit which appears in his *Meditations*, there is still a note of sadness which had already been sounded by Seneca and Epictetus; there is a sense of the vanity of all things which makes itself felt again and again as we read his book. For all his belief in the harmony of this universe the Emperor exhorts himself too much to make the best of a sad and wicked world. What Marcus Aurelius felt others had been feeling for generations. The passion for assurance of protection here and salvation hereafter, the longing for union with God, would not be quieted. The West offered little satisfaction; the answers from the East will occupy our next lectures.

<sup>1</sup> IV, 23.

## VIII

### ORIENTAL RELIGIONS IN THE WESTERN HALF OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**I**N our previous lectures we have had occasion more than once to refer to the effect of the conquests of Alexander in opening up the nearer East to the European West, and in making easy the contact between Greeks and Orientals, especially those of Semitic and Persian stocks. Greece, Egypt, and western Asia were for a brief period united in one great empire; and although that political empire quickly broke into many units, the sway of the Greek language and of Greek ideas was permanently extended over wide areas where they had not had potent influence before, and by this extension a door was opened for the entrance of oriental ideas into the West. No doubt the Macedonian conqueror simply accelerated a process which had been going on imperceptibly through the channels of trade and of war from prehistoric times. Now with regard to the question of oriental influence on the Greek world from the earliest period, there has been much extravagant statement and conjecture: the Orphics, Pythagoras, Plato, and others too are said to have derived many of their ideas from the East. Such inaccuracies I wish to avoid. Indeed I will take this opportunity to state that apart from certain cults which we shall

presently consider I am unable to see any clear proof of direct and concrete eastern influence on Greek or Roman philosophic and religious thought until the second century B.C., at the earliest; and that I believe that the amount of such influence later — up to the time when the Jewish and the Greek streams of thought united in Christian theology — has been greatly overestimated. Nevertheless it is true that in certain places, especially at Alexandria in Egypt, the greatest intellectual center in the ancient world after 300 B.C., there was some mingling of Hellenic and Semitic thought. The translation of the sacred books of the Jews into Greek, which we know as the Septuagint, began as early as the third century, but this translation was made for Hellenized Jews of the dispersion and had little interest for Greeks until the Christian period. But in the middle of the second century before our era a certain Aristobulus endeavored to reconcile Greek philosophy, especially that of the Peripatetic School, with Jewish wisdom, and to show that the Greeks drew their philosophy from the Mosaic laws and the prophets. The so-called Wisdom of Solomon also betrays the influence of Hellenic thought on Jews at Alexandria; and we have in an earlier lecture seen how the Greek and the Jew met in Philo. Moreover all the later Platonists, Pythagoreans, and similar sects were in some degree at least in accord with the Jewish thought of the time; and in general we know that the intellectual metropolis of the ancient world showed a fusion of West and East in society and ideas such as was hardly found elsewhere.

But while this mingling of the Greek and the Jew was going on at Alexandria, a new power was rising in Italy, which, having secured the mastery of the western half of the Mediterranean, turned its attention toward the East. Let us call to mind the position of Rome at the close of the Second Punic War in 202 B.C. She was mistress of practically the entire Italian peninsula from the Alps to the Straits of Messina; by her two wars with Carthage she had gained Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, and a large part of Spain — in short at the end of the third century before our era Rome was the dominant power in the West. Within the next two centuries she was destined to take and in no small degree to Latinize all of modern Spain and Portugal, the whole of France and Belgium, a part of Holland, the Rhine districts, Switzerland, southern Germany, and Austria below the Danube; she was to extend her power over the greater part of the Balkan peninsula including Greece; and she was to become mistress of the most of Asia Minor, of Syria and Palestine, of Egypt, and of all northern Africa with the exception of what is now Morocco. The whole civilized world, and many lands to which this name could hardly be applied, were brought under her sway before the close of the first Christian century.

In their conquests of eastern lands Roman soldiers came directly into contact with Asiatic, Syrian, and Egyptian forms of religion, so that on their return to the West they brought with them some knowledge of eastern gods. But the influence of oriental cults had begun before Rome entered on her military conquests;



for a long time she had had mercantile and diplomatic relations with Asia Minor and Egypt. Trade indeed was one of the great channels through which goods no less than gods moved from the East to the West. The Greeks of western Asia Minor, of Delos, of southern Italy and Sicily were the middlemen who assisted in these transfers. Furthermore, beginning with the second pre-christian century, enormous numbers of slaves were brought from Asia Minor and the neighboring lands to Italy and the West. These slaves were of every degree from the most ignorant to the highly cultivated, but whatever their class they brought with them their own religions, which they practised in their captivity and thus made known to their masters. At a later period, under the Empire, auxiliary troops, enlisted in the eastern provinces, were stationed at many points in the West. The remains of shrines and hundreds of inscriptions found along the Danube and the Rhine, in remotest Britain, in Spain and Portugal, as well as in France and other lands, show that these auxiliary troops did much to introduce oriental gods to the areas in which they served. So traders, slaves, and soldiers became the great agents in transfer of those oriental religions, which in the first three centuries of our era were spread over all the western part of the Roman Empire.

Yet the first oriental deity to be received at Rome was invited there by vote of the Senate. In one of the darkest hours of the Second Punic War, in 205 B.C., the Sibylline Books declared that Hannibal would be forced



to leave Italy if the great Mother of the Gods could be brought from Phrygia to Rome. King Attalus of Pergamum, a friend and ally of the Romans, readily gave up the meteoric stone that represented the goddess, and in 204 this was received with great ceremony at Rome. Thirteen years later the divinity was installed in her permanent home on the Palatine, where the ruins of her temple may still be seen. The character of her worship was wholly different from that of any god hitherto known at Rome, and the citizens must have been greatly shocked when they first beheld it: Phrygian priests dancing and mutilating themselves furnished an appalling contrast to the sober ritual of the state. So offensive were these performances that no Roman was allowed to become a priest of the goddess until after the close of the Republic. Only on April 4 did a state official — the city praetor — offer sacrifice in the temple of the goddess, and on this same day sodalities formed among the aristocracy dined together in her honor; in 194 plays were presented on her festal day, and three years later with the dedication of her temple there were established in her honor the *Ludi Megalenses*, which, however, did not differ essentially from similar festivals in honor of Roman gods. But the temple service was restricted to the imported Phrygian priests, who were allowed on certain days to dance through the streets to the sound of their wild music, singing hymns to the goddess, and taking up collections for the support of the worship. Only under the Empire were Roman citizens admitted to the priestly offices. Yet from the first the

goddess was held in high esteem, for the promise of the Sibylline Books had been fulfilled — Hannibal had been forced to withdraw to Africa, and the Roman cause had triumphed with divine help.

Other divinities came in what may be described as unofficial ways, through the agencies that I have already mentioned. For example, as early as the third century before our era, the worship of the goddess Isis and her associates Serapis, Anubis, and the rest, spread from Alexandria into Sicily and southern Italy, as it had extended in the same period to Delos and the other islands of the Aegean Sea and to the coast of Asia Minor. Before 105 B.C. a temple had been built at Puteoli, the important seaport of that day on the Bay of Naples, which had close commercial relations with Delos and other ports in the East. The temple of Isis at Pompeii was erected at about the same period. Within half a century a shrine of the goddess had been established on the very Capitol at Rome, where she maintained herself in spite of many efforts to dislodge her. This Egyptian cult had been introduced by immigrant traders and slaves, but it soon spread to other classes. About 38 A.D., a temple to the goddess was erected on the Campus Martius not far from the Pantheon. There is today in front of the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva a little east of the Pantheon an elephant carrying on his back a small obelisk at which he casts an amusing look. That obelisk originally stood before the temple of Isis, which was the chief center of the Egyptian cult at Rome to the end of paganism.

The campaigns of Sulla and Pompey in Asia Minor had brought the soldiers into contact with the worship of a Cappadocian "Mother-goddess," Mâ, to whom the Romans gave the Italian name of Bellona. The cult of this divinity was apparently carried on privately at Rome during the last half-century of the Republic, but the goddess did not receive official recognition before the third Christian century.

It was in the first century of our era, however, that a flood of divinities came from the East to the West. Of these I can mention only a few. From northern Syria slaves and traders brought the Syrian goddess Atargatis, whom they made known as far as Britain under the name of Dea Syria. From many Syrian towns came the local Baalim, who were regularly identified with Iupiter Optimus Maximus. So Adad, the consort of Atargatis at Hierapolis in Syria, was known in the West; the Baal of Heliopolis, Baalbec, was worshipped as Iupiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus, not only in Italy, but in the Balkan peninsula, along the Danube and the Rhine, and in Gaul. The Syrian port Berytus, the modern Beyrout, became apparently a center for the export, so to speak, of these oriental divinities. We have inscriptions which show that an association of Syrian merchants coming from this city was settled at Puteoli, where they formed a religious society, cultores Iovis Heliopolitani Berytenses, which carried on the worship of the Baal of Heliopolis at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century of our era. A dedication to the same god, from Nîmes in southern

France, was set up by a retired centurion, who tells us that his home was Beyrout; and likewise in the third century at Zellhausen near the Rhine another centurion paid his devotions to the gods and wrote himself down as from the same place. From the little town of Doliche in Commagene, a district of northern Syria, soldiers carried their warlike god to the western borders of the Roman world; Damascus furnished Iupiter Optimus Maximus Damascenus; and I might quote many other illustrations. More important, however, than these divinities was the god Mithras, whose worship originated in Persia, but had long been established in Asia Minor. It was to become prominent in the West at the close of the first Christian century.

I have already said that these oriental gods were known over virtually all the western world. We naturally find the evidence for their worship most abundant in the great centers of trade and in those districts where soldiers were quartered. In Italy the ports of Puteoli on the Bay of Naples and of Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber, together with the capital, Rome, have yielded the most evidence; but the oriental cults were found throughout the Italian peninsula. In the provinces of the Gauls and the Germanies we find two great areas — the populous valleys of the Rhone and the upper Garonne, and the Rhine valley. The chief centers, as we should expect, were for the most part the larger towns or army headquarters: Marseilles, Arles, Orange, Die, Vaison, Vienne, Nîmes, Narbonne, and Bordeaux; Lyons, Trêves, Mayence, Heddernheim, and



Cologne. Occasionally a small town showed remarkable devotion to some cult, as did Lactoure in Aquitaine, where the Great Mother of the Gods was especially popular in the latter third of the second and the first half of the third century of our era. In like fashion these cults flourished along the valley of the Danube and even in remote Dacia, which included approximately modern Rumania and Transylvania; dedications are also found in the more important towns in Africa, Spain, and Britain, being most abundant in the last named province along the line of Hadrian's wall.

With regard to the centuries during which these oriental religions flourished, our evidence, aside from that for the Great Mother, shows clearly that some entered southern Italy in the second century B.C. or even earlier, and that they began at Rome about 100 B.C.; there they lasted to the very close of the fourth century of our era, almost a hundred years after the recognition of Christianity by Constantine. In the provinces of the Roman Empire these cults did not become prominent until about 100 A.D., and they ceased before the close of the third century. When in 307 A.D. Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius restored a shrine of Mithras, "the protector of their empire," at Carnuntum on the Danube, they were honoring a god whose potency in the European provinces had ended more than a generation before.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the decay of these cults we

<sup>1</sup> *CIL.* III, 4413. III, 4796 from Tanzenberg in southern Austria, is an important witness here, for it records the restoration in 311 by the governor of the province of a Mithraic shrine which had been deserted for over fifty years.



shall consider later. But I should like you now to observe that in Rome these religions flourished for a good century longer than they did in the western provinces. The explanation of this fact is to be found in that sharp conflict between paganism and Christianity that went on throughout the fourth century, when the pagan party rallied its forces of every sort for a final defense against the advance of Christianity. This movement at Rome, which had slight influence elsewhere save perhaps in some of the largest cities, produced a pagan revival which helped to maintain the adopted oriental religions for over a century after they had lost all vitality in the provinces.

The character of these oriental religions offers a marked contrast to that of the Roman. In my last lecture I pointed out that this latter was a formal, practical, bread-and-butter sort of religion, one that was natural to an unimaginative agricultural people; it was a religion in which the worship of the gods consisted primarily in the exact performance of ritual to secure practical blessings of a material kind. I further tried to show that this religion offered no satisfaction to man's deeper questionings, made slight appeal to religious emotion, and had little moral effect except in the emphasis which it laid on duty; we also saw that the forms of Greek religion, which were imported into Italy, were serviceable chiefly in that they were cults in which all classes of citizens could share, and because they offered certain aesthetic satisfactions; I likewise spoke of the way in which the Greco-Roman religion of the

state fell into decay after the end of the third century before our era, so that before Cicero's day the intellectual class had lost their belief in it. This did not mean, however, that men had lost their religious longing. Far from it. For there is abundant proof that under the stimulus of Greek philosophy and mysticism, questionings as to the nature of man, his relation to divinity, and his immortality became more earnest. To these questions the Greco-Roman religion offered no answer.

The oriental gods, however, were of a very different sort from those of Greece and Rome: they required a spiritual devotion on the part of their devotees and they made strong appeals to the religious emotions. These appeals were increased by the exotic character of these foreign cults, for it seems to be a characteristic of the human mind in time of special need or distress to seek some foreign source of help or relief. Egypt and the East made a far greater appeal to the imagination at the close of the Roman Republic and in the early Empire than they do in our day. Furthermore many of these religions could claim the warrant of great age: Isis and Osiris had been mighty in Egypt for two thousand years; the Great Mother of the Gods belonged to a class of Asiatic mother-goddesses of immemorial antiquity; and Mithras came from a period beyond the knowledge of the Roman world. Whenever records failed, pious tradition supplied the need. The devotees formed closed communities, sacred brotherhoods, to which admission was obtained through rites of initia-

tion. Their rituals were essentially mysteries, in which through emotional experiences and revelations the devout gained assurance of divine aid here and hereafter. Furthermore these oriental religions had proselyting priests who recruited the number of devotees by their appeals, and each religion numbered among its followers considerable bodies of men who followed a certain holy life — they were known as *sacrati*, “the consecrated.” There was, in fact, much in common between these oriental mysteries and the greater mysteries of Greece and the Orphic religion.

These oriental gods, moreover, were adaptable. They were frequently identified with familiar Greek and Roman divinities, in the same fashion as Greek gods had been given Italian names; but their adaptability went much further. Freed from all local restrictions, the Orientals could take on the characteristics and functions required by their new environment without losing their individualities, and their systems could be easily modified and elevated to meet the needs and demands of successive generations. Unmoral or even immoral when first brought into the Greco-Roman world, a number of them adopted first the current secular morality and eventually became strong moral agencies. Finally they all displayed a pantheistic tendency. We have already seen how philosophy inclined from the first toward pantheism or monotheism; that the general attitude which first belonged to the philosopher became finally common to large numbers of men, for the human mind naturally tends to see resemblances and through

them affinities, rather than their opposites. Therefore in religious thought men, acting consciously or unconsciously under the influence of philosophy and of this syncretistic tendency, now looked through the variety of popular polytheism and found unity in the divine; they did not deny the multiplicity of gods, but they rather regarded each of the many gods as a manifestation of the one divine principle in the world. So religion was in agreement with Stoicism and the later mystic philosophies.

The devotees of the oriental gods generally adopted this syncretistic view, so that most, if not all, saw in their god the supreme all-embracing divinity whose divine nature was manifest in countless other gods. This belief is best expressed by Apuleius, who composed his famous *Metamorphoses* in the middle of the second century of our era. After his hero Lucius had passed through many hardships and adventures, the saving goddess Isis appeared in a vision and thus declared herself: "Lo, I am here, Lucius, moved by thy prayers, I, the parent of the universe, mistress of the elements, the primal offspring of the ages, greatest of divinities, queen of the dead, first among the celestials, the single form of gods and goddesses; I, who by my word rule the bright heights of heaven, the healthful breezes of the sea, the gloomy silent shades below. To my divinity, one in itself, the entire world does reverence under many forms, with varied rites, and manifold names. Hence it is that the primal Phrygians call me at Pessinus the Mother of the Gods, hence the Athenians, who are



sprung from the ground on which they dwell, name me Cecropian Minerva, the wave-beat Cyprians Paphian Venus, the archer Cretans Dictynnan Diana, the Sicilians with their triple speech Stygian Proserpina, the people of Eleusis ancient Ceres, others Juno, others Bellona, some Hecate, again Rhamnusia; but the Aethiopians on whom shine the growing rays of the sun at his birth, the Arians, and the Egyptians, mighty in their ancient learning, worship me with the proper rites and call me by my true name Queen Isis.”<sup>1</sup>

This revelation by the goddess not only squares with the pantheism of philosophic thought and with the doctrine of emanations of the divine, such as were believed in by the Neoplatonists, but it is also in harmony with the popular polytheism. At the beginning of the second century of our era the genial Plutarch first stated a philosophy of a universal syncretistic religion: “Not different gods among different peoples — gods of Barbarians, of Greeks, of the South, or of the North; but even as sun and moon, heaven and earth and sea are common to all, yet have different names among different peoples, so there is one Intelligence which rules in the world, one Providence which directs it; the same powers act everywhere. Honors, names, and symbols vary.”<sup>2</sup> This statement represents the attitude of all the more enlightened classes after the beginning of the second century. A pantheism, which made abundant provision for a subordinate polytheism, was the dominant belief. In fact Greco-Roman paganism ended in such a pan-

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* XI, 5. Cf. *Oxyr. Pap.* XI, 1380.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Osir.*, 67.



theism, in which the sun was the symbol of the supreme and all-embracing divinity.

Although many, if not most, of these eastern religions were probably mysteries, requiring that their devotees should undergo certain initiatory rites before being admitted to full participation in the sacred service, we shall confine ourselves to sure ground and shall consider briefly the mysteries of Isis, of Mithras, and of the Great Mother of the Gods — especially those of Isis, because Apuleius, from whose work I quoted a moment ago, has left us a rather full account of the initiation of his hero Lucius, whose experiences in this part of the *Metamorphoses* are apparently the author's own.

Isis and Osiris were ancient gods whose worship had been wide spread in Egypt from very early times; they had been carried by Egyptian traders to some other parts of the Mediterranean world before the conquests of Alexander. But the form of the Isiac religion which ultimately spread over the Greco-Roman world was a conscious mingling of Egyptian and Hellenic elements. The Ptolemies naturally desired to unite the Greeks and Egyptians under their rule, and Ptolemy Soter (306–285 B.C.), the first of the line, according to Plutarch, employed Manetho, a priest at Heliopolis in Egypt, and Timotheus, one of the sacred family of the Eumolpidae in Eleusis, to work out a modified religion of Isis, with whom was now associated a new divinity, Serapis, said to have been originally Hades of Sinope, a Greek colony on the south shore of the Black Sea. Thus Greek elements were grafted on the Egyptian stock, Serapis being

identified with Osiris. The ancient forms apparently were largely retained, and the priesthood remained Egyptian; but Greek became the common language for the ritual, while Greek artists made statues of Isis and her consort, and Greek poets sang the goddess's praise. Thus the spread of this composite religion was rendered easy, especially as its mysteries claimed to give that assurance of salvation for which men longed.

The mysteries were based on the story of Osiris, the brother and husband of Isis. According to the tale Set, or Typhon, killed Osiris, but the body was discovered by Isis. However while Isis was visiting her son Horus, Set again gained possession of the body, tore it in pieces, and scattered its fragments far and wide. But these Isis once more found and buried, and now Osiris lives again and reigns in the lower world, and also in heaven, as the sun; that is, Osiris-Serapis is lord of life and death. The story was early brought into relation with the Egyptian doctrine of immortality. It is another myth of a god who dies and lives again, whose rebirth, like that of Dionysus, Attis, and Adonis, becomes the warrant of man's future existence. The story was early acted as a kind of passion play at Abydos; this element was kept in the Ptolemaic creation, so that in Rome, at least beginning with the reigns of Caligula and of Claudius, the hunt of Isis for her murdered consort, her mourning for him, and her joy over the discovery of his body and over his revival were experienced again yearly by her priests during the days from October 28 to November 3. The final joy of the participants in this

sacred season was indicated by the name, *Hilaria*, given to the last day. The Empire also knew a spring festival of the goddess as ruler of the sea and protectress of sailors.

There were three grades of initiation into the Isiac mysteries. The first was that of Isis, the second of Osiris-Serapis, the third led to the priesthood. In Apuleius' story his hero Lucius had through overcurious tampering with a magic unguent been changed into the shape of an ass. In this form he suffered various adventures which fill the greater part of the extraordinary work; but at last, through the favor of the goddess, he was restored to his human form, and in a vision was commanded to devote himself to the divine service. Although most eager to be initiated, he was informed that he must wait until the goddess should indicate her willingness to receive him. Finally another vision told him that the happy day had arrived. At dawn the priest met him and conducted him to the temple, where the matin service of opening the shrine was solemnly performed. Then he told Lucius that he must provide certain things before the initiation took place — evidently gifts to the temple and the priests and something in the nature of a fee. After these had been secured, Lucius was taken to a public bath nearby, where after prayer the priest sprinkled him with holy water and duly purified him. Then Lucius was led back to the temple, set at the feet of the goddess, and secretly given many instructions "too sacred for utterance"; openly he was charged to abstain for ten con-

secutive days from all pleasures of the table, to eat no animal food, and to drink no wine.

After the ten days of preparation had been reverently observed, toward nightfall great numbers of the initiates assembled bringing gifts to the neophyte. When the uninitiate had been excluded from the temple area, a fresh robe was placed about Lucius and he was led into the holiest part of the shrine. What there took place he might not tell; only this much he could say: "I approached the bounds of death. I trod the threshold of Proserpina. I was carried through all the elements and returned again to the upper air. At dead of night I saw the sun all glowing with a brilliant light. The gods of heaven and of hell I approached in very person and worshipped face to face."<sup>1</sup>

Our imagination may busy itself as much as it will with trying to conceive the means which were employed to produce this effect; it is most probable that a hypnotic condition was induced in the neophyte and that in this state he was made to see the proper visions. But that must remain uncertain. This, however, is clear: the initiate, through a series of emotional experiences, was inspired with the belief that he had seen a divine vision. Like the seer in the Apocalypse, he knew that there was no night in the final abode of those who had been consecrated. By passing through the elements he had acquired a knowledge of holy things, which no uninitiated could possibly gain: he had been given assurance that he was to be ever after under the divine

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* XI, 23.



protection — in fact he had attained the certainty of salvation.

But let us follow Apuleius' hero through his later experiences. The morning after his secret initiation Lucius was clothed in twelve sacred articles of dress and placed on a wooden dais in the middle of the shrine before the statue of the goddess; over him was thrown a linen garment, richly embroidered in various colors with marvellous animals, with Indian dragons and hyperborean gryphons. In his right hand was put a lighted torch, while on his head was placed a garland of palm leaves, which stood out like the rays of the sun. Then the curtains were drawn back and the neophyte was displayed to the assembled people. The meaning of this ceremony also is evident: by initiation Lucius had become one with the god, and therefore this exhibition of him is the epiphany of the initiate as the Sun God. The last is clearly indicated by the garland of palm leaves which represented the rays of the sun. The meaning of the dress is obscure to us, but naturally it was effective in the impression which it made on the wearer and on those who viewed him. After this epiphany certain minor rites followed on the next day, completing the initiation of Lucius into the first degree, that of Isis.

When he had continued for some days to enjoy the inexpressible bliss afforded him by the sight of the goddess and had received the blessings that her power bestowed, Lucius set out from Corinth for Rome in obedience to a vision which the goddess had granted him.



There, when a year had rolled round, he was divinely warned that he was to advance to the second degree, that of the invincible Osiris; and shortly after this he was ordered in like manner to take the highest degree of initiation; henceforth he was a priest and an official in the sacred association. For the second and third degrees the same days of preparation were required as for the first, and like ceremonies were performed. When the final initiation had been undergone, Lucius was marked by a shaven head, and apparently also by a sign branded on his forehead, as one who had consecrated his life to Isis.<sup>1</sup>

This is a brief summary of the fullest account that we possess of an initiation into any of these oriental mysteries. We see from it not only how the initiate was given the satisfaction of feeling that he had seen divinity face to face — a vision by which he obtained a foretaste of the final knowledge of god and received assurance of his own salvation; but also how his religious life was constantly fed and supported by daily religious services, by matins and vespers in the temple. In these his emotions were stimulated and his consecration renewed by a ritual made impressive through every means which an immemorial history had sanctified and by every suggestion which an elaborate symbolism could give. He realized that he had become a member of a body set apart from the rest of the world. The members of this holy company were called "the consecrated ones," *sacrati*. They had been born again indeed through initiation into the Isiac life. The term reborn,

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* XI, 19-30.

renatus, is used frequently of the initiates, the day of whose initiation was often referred to and celebrated as their birthday.

More widely spread and more powerful than the religion of Isis was the religion of Mithras. Into the details of its early history we may not now go, but we must limit ourselves to a few points only. Mithraism had its origin in Persia, yet it was greatly influenced by the ancient theology of the Chaldeans and by Babylonian astrology, as well as later by the more barbarous religions of Asia Minor, whither it was carried by Persian colonists during the last three centuries before the Christian era. The Romans first came into contact with it during Pompey's campaign against the pirates of Cilicia in 67 B.C., but the soldiers seem not to have been greatly impressed at that time, for it was about a hundred and fifty years later that Mithraism began to be influential in the West. Soldiers, traders, and slaves all aided in its spread. For the most part it followed in the steps of the Syrian gods, with whom it was closely associated. Along the borders of the Roman Empire, at the military stations on the Danube, on the Rhine, and by Hadrian's Wall in Britain inscriptions and ruined chapels still attest the popularity of the cult; there are few Roman military centers in Europe, outside of Greece, or in the African provinces, which have not given evidence of its existence. In the ports of Italy, Puteoli and Ostia, in Rome, and in all the chief cities of the West, traders and slaves introduced the Persian religion; and the cult attracted many Roman citizens;

it found favor with the imperial house, especially from Commodus to Diocletian. In fact during the second and third centuries Christianity found in Mithraism its chief rival.

Mithras himself was an extremely ancient divinity known to the ancestors of both the Iranian and Indian peoples. In early Zoroastrianism he had no place, but later appeared as one of the inferior divinities. Under the manifold influences to which Persian Mazdaism was exposed, the position of Mithras gradually rose in importance. The details of the theology at the time the religion became known to the Romans cannot be determined, but it seems evident that the main features were these: the Mazdaists conceived of the world as a battleground in which the powers of light and of righteousness were ever fighting against the powers of darkness and of evil; at the head of the powers of light was Ahura Mazda, Oromasdes, or, to use the form more familiar to us, Ormuzd; opposed to him was Ahriman, the arch-fiend and adversary, lord of the world of darkness, who with his demons was thought to strive continually to spread evil in the world; midway was Mithras whose function was to help mankind and to hasten the destruction of wickedness. So far as we can judge from the sculptured monuments, Mithras in the sacred myths was not identified with the sun, yet it is clear that he was regarded by the Roman devotees as the chief divinity of light. This position was the more easily assured him by the fact that he had been originally such a god, so that the Chaldeans had identified him with Shamash,

their solar divinity, just as the Greeks in Asia Minor had made him equivalent to their sun god, Helios. Later philosophy too lent its aid in that it took the sun as the supreme symbol of divinity. On Roman dedications Mithras is often called simply "The Invincible Sun," Sol Invictus.

For all its exotic character Mithraism could offer nothing essentially new in point of theology which would attract devotees, nor could it win them simply by its elaborate and distinctive ritual. The characteristic which distinguished it from the other religions of its time save Christianity was the thoroughgoing dualism to which I have just referred — I mean that dualism which divided the world into two opposing armies, the one the legions of light and righteousness, the other the forces of sin and darkness. The evil principle was deified in the same way as the principle of good. It is quite true that the Greeks and other peoples had conceived of evil powers, like the Titans for example, but nowhere was the opposition between the two made so sharp or the conflict regarded as so constant. In the cosmic struggle the Mithraist believed man shared; for he too, the microcosm, was both good and evil, so that the same battle had to be waged within him as everywhere in the world. This religion, then, was able to supply a strong moral motive for the individual: he was bound to struggle continually against the powers of sin to aid in bringing about the final victory of the powers of righteousness, and he was taught that in this struggle Mithras gave the faithful constant aid.



Mithraism therefore was well suited to stir and energize the individual in a time when the ancient fibre of the Romans was relaxing and when the signs of social and economic decay were evident. In the first three centuries of the Empire, as we have already had occasion to observe more than once, the loss of political power and the weakening of the satisfactions that a vigorous society can give, led men to search for other rewards and assurances than those of this world; in the mystic philosophies and religions they found their strength and hope. No oriental pagan cult had so much to offer as Mithraism. Its compelling system of ethics, the high ideal of moral purity which it inherited from its Persian source, the fraternity which its associations fostered, and the confidence which the promise of Mithras' aid gave the individual, all combined to extend its sway to the westernmost boundaries of the Roman Empire and to maintain its power until it was forced to yield before the victorious advance of a nobler faith.

The Mithraic worship was carried on in small chapels which would seldom hold as many as a hundred worshippers at once, so that when the number of devotees was considerable more than one chapel was required. No less than five have been found at Ostia, the seaport at the mouth of the Tiber, and in the capital some sixty have been discovered. These structures were generally half-subterranean, recalling the sacred cave of the Mithraic legend. Before each was a pronaos, an ante-room, from which steps led down to the chapel proper. Through the middle of this ran an aisle flanked on either



side by a raised platform for the devotees. In the floor were often represented the signs of the Zodiac, which played an important part in the belief. The farther end of the chapel contained a relief which always reproduced the same scene in the type which some Pergamene sculptor had established in the Hellenistic period. The god Mithras was shown in the act of slaying the sacred bull; subordinate figures and creatures were also represented, and on some reliefs a series of scenes from the sacred legends formed a frame for the central representation. We can readily understand something of the effect produced on the mind of the neophyte when he was first introduced into the lighted chapel from the darkness without. The rows of worshippers on either side, the symbolic figures and signs, and especially the sacred relief which was doubtless brightly illuminated, must have all combined to stimulate acutely the tiro's imagination, already stirred by his anticipations.

There were seven grades of initiation, each with its symbol and magic name. The first stage was that of the Raven (*corax*), the second that of the Hidden One (*κρύφιος*), and the third that of the Soldier (*miles*). These first three degrees seem to have been preliminary, so that the initiate was not admitted to full participation in the privileges of the sacred community until he had been inducted into the fourth degree, the Lion (*leo*). The succeeding degrees were the Persian (*Persa*), the Courier of the Sun (*ἡλιοδρόμος*), and the Father (*pater*); the head of a number of Mithraic communities was apparently the *Pater Patrum*. Each stage had its

proper initiatory ceremonies, admission to which required abstinence, lustrations and ablutions, and many symbolic acts. The courage and constancy of the neophyte were tested; oaths were administered to him; a seal was set on his forehead; he was bound to secrecy; and doubtless many other vows were required. The candidate for the degree of the Soldier was presented with a crown which he was expected to thrust aside and to say that Mithras was his only crown. He was made to feel that he had enlisted for a sacred warfare against the powers of evil and to realize that perfect purity was the goal toward which the faithful must strive. Apparently the culminating point of the tests and trials which the neophyte underwent was a symbolic death in which he died at the hands of the priest and rose again into a new and purified existence. Such rites are common in similar mysteries, but there is some reason to suspect that in Mithraism the symbolic act had an especially terrifying nature.

The religious life of the devotees was fed by meetings held in the half-underground chapels. A part of the services evidently consisted of a sacred communion, which, with consecrated cup and loaf, recalled the sacred meal that Mithras had once celebrated with the Sun after he had completed his service upon the earth. This is shown on a relief discovered some years since at Konjica in Dalmatia, in which Mithras and the Sun are shown reclining at table, where they are served by attendants, one of whom wears a Phrygian cap, another a mask of a crow, a third that of a lion, while

the head of the fourth is hopelessly mutilated.<sup>1</sup> It was believed that this mystic communion on earth gave the devotees strength and wisdom, that it imparted the power necessary to combat the emissaries of evil, and conferred immortality upon those who partook of it. The parallelism with the Christian eucharist is self-evident, and it is not strange that the church fathers claimed that the Mithraists had stolen from Christianity.

According to the Mithraic doctrine the divine essence in man survived, and was susceptible of rewards and punishments after this life. When the body died the emissaries from heaven and the powers of darkness contended for the possession of the soul. It stood on trial before Mithras, the final judge. If the man had been impure, his soul was dragged below for torture, but if virtuous, then his soul rose to the celestial regions. At this point we come upon a doctrine which seems to be foreign to Mazdaism, and which was doubtless borrowed from alien sources. The heavens were conceived to be seven spheres presided over by the seven planets, the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. In each sphere was a gate guarded by an angel of Ormuzd. To open these gates magic names and passwords were necessary, which were known only to the initiates. The souls of men were thought to have descended from the empyrean through these spheres, receiving from the planets that presided over them the passions and qualities which they exhibited when

<sup>1</sup> Published by Cumont, *Mystères de Mithra*<sup>2</sup>, p. 132, fig. 18.

incarnate on earth. As the righteous soul returned, it dropped at each stage of its ascent its earthly passions and faculties like garments, until, stripped and pure, it entered into eternal bliss. In the realms of everlasting light beyond the stars, it enjoyed the companionship of the gods themselves.

With this concept of the final fate of the soul there was inconsistently united a doctrine of a final resurrection of the flesh when the world should come to an end. It may be that the sublimated doctrine of the bliss of the purified soul did not appeal to the ordinary man, and that, therefore, there was introduced from some external source this belief that the whole man, flesh and spirit alike, would ultimately enjoy a blissful existence. In any case the Mithraist believed that the struggle between the contending powers of good and evil was not to continue forever; that in the fullness of time the evil powers would destroy the world, but that Mithras would once more descend, wake the dead, and separate the good from the evil; with a new communion he would then confer immortality on all the just, while the wicked would be consumed with Ahriman and his fiends, and Mithras would reign in a new and sinless world forever.

These are some of the essential features of Mithraism. It was a religion which called for unceasing effort, for action on the part of men, and which promised them divine aid in their efforts. It is little wonder that it was popular in the Roman Empire, or that it appealed to soldiers and to civilians alike. The remains of its chapels and the dedications to its god furnish more



abundant evidence than we possess for any other oriental religion. Although in common with other cults of this sort it had fallen into decay in the provinces of the western world before the end of the third century, yet it was kept alive by the pagan revival at Rome until nearly 400 A.D.

In the cult of the Great Mother of the Gods and Attis also there developed certain rites which gave the promise of security here and of salvation after death — the greatest religious concern of the opening centuries of the Roman Empire. Down to the close of the Republic the Great Mother apparently exerted no very wide or deep influence on the people. She had quickly accomplished the purpose for which she had been brought in 204 B.C., and therefore, with the exceptions of which I spoke earlier in this lecture, her worship was left to the Phrygian priests. Attis certainly played a small part at Rome before the Empire, but by the second century of our era, if not before, he overshadowed to a considerable extent the Great Goddess herself.

The story of Attis has many forms in detail, due no doubt to original local differences and to the influences of later environment. The kernel of the literary myth is as follows: Attis, a beautiful shepherd, was loved by the Great Goddess; when he refused her advances, he was driven mad by her, and in his frenzy mutilated himself at the foot of a pine tree, into which his spirit departed, while from his blood sprang violets. But in answer to the prayers of the mourning goddess Attis was presently restored to life. The primitive elements



from which this myth developed we need not now discuss, but it will be sufficient to note that in Attis, as in Adonis, we have an eastern vegetation-divinity, a god who dies and lives again, thus becoming a symbol of man's resurrection into immortality and an earnest of his hope. The parallel cases of Osiris, Dionysus, and Persephone will also occur to all.

In honor of Attis a spring festival was held in which the drama of the myth was repeated by the priests and devotees. This festival was introduced at Rome during the reign of Claudius (41-54 A.D.), from which time the god's importance there may be dated.<sup>1</sup> The celebration began on March 15, which is designated in a calendar of the fourth century by *Canna intrat*. These obscure words must be brought into connection with the colleges of the Cannophori, "reed-bearers," which are known to us from inscriptions, but the significance of the day is not clear; apparently it is to be connected with the story of the discovery of the infant Attis, who had been exposed among the reeds by the banks of the river Gal-lus. On March 22, *Arbor intrat*, the dendrophori, "tree-bearers," cut down a pine tree and in solemn procession brought its trunk, decorated with violets and woollen fillets, to the temple of the Great Mother on the Palatine. This act was obviously in memory of the pine tree into which the spirit of Attis passed at his death. Two days later came the "day of blood," *Sanguen, dies*

<sup>1</sup> Lydus, *de mens.* IV, 59. Cf. Cumont, *The Oriental Religions*, pp. 55 ff. Some scholars doubt the evidence and would place the introduction of the festivals in the time of the Antonines; so Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*<sup>2</sup>, p. 322.

*Sanguinis*, which marked the height of the mourning for Attis. Stimulated by wild music and dances, the Galli scourged themselves with whips loaded with pieces of bone or metal, slashed their arms with knives, offering their blood on the altar of the goddess, while the would-be Galli mutilated themselves. The whole period from the first day was a time of sorrow, during which fasting and continence were required; it was followed on March 25th, *Hilaria*, "rejoicing," by the wildest outbursts of joy in celebration of the resurrection of Attis.<sup>1</sup> The next day was that of "rest," *Requietio*; and on the 27th, the festival closed with the solemn bathing in the brook Almo of the sacred meteoric stone, which was the symbol of the Great Mother. It is clear that this festival, centering in the spring equinox, had its origin in rites which were intended to recall the vegetation from its winter's death into vernal life again, but like other similar festivals it had long had a deeper meaning before it came to Rome. As the Orphic devotee by participation in the holy rites became a Bacchus, the Isiac an Osiris, so here the orgiastic participant became an Attis and received assurance of his own resurrection. The result was identical in all essentials with that in other mysteries.

But from the second century of our era there was celebrated in the western part of the Roman Empire another mystic rite in the worship of the Great Mother to which we must now turn our attention for a moment. I mean that ritual of purification and regeneration by

<sup>1</sup> The same name was used in the festival of Isis. Cf. p. 273.

means of the blood of a slain bull which the ancients called the *taurobolium*. Without much doubt this rite developed from the sacrifice of a bull to the Great Mother, such as was made annually on March 15 at Rome. But the *taurobolium* was no ordinary sacrifice. It is first mentioned in the west in an inscription from Puteoli of 134 A.D.;<sup>1</sup> thence it quickly spread to Rome, from there to Lyons; and it was celebrated in many parts of the western provinces during the second and third centuries. Like the other oriental rites it lived on at Rome long after it had died in the provinces, the last celebration being near the close of the fourth century. One of the earliest places at Rome for the performance of the *taurobolium* was in the Vatican district close by the circus erected by the Emperor Caligula and enlarged by Nero. There, certainly from the time of Antoninus Pius to the end of the fourth century, this purifying and regenerating ritual was performed, never with more passionate hope of its efficacy than during the fourth century, when for some seventy years this pagan shrine and St. Peter's first basilica stood side by side, fanes of the dying faith and of the triumphing religion. It stirs the imagination to recall that when in the early seventeenth century certain changes were being made in the present St. Peter's, a considerable number of inscriptions were discovered buried in the ground, recording the celebration of the *taurobolium* by members of the nobility after the first St. Peter's had been built.<sup>2</sup> So side

<sup>1</sup> *CIL*. X, 1596. Here the rite was celebrated in honor of Venus Caelestis and not of the Great Mother, to whose ritual, however, it clearly belonged.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* VI, 497-504; cf. *IGSI*. 1019, 1020.

by side the two rival religions contended for the mastery.

The two descriptions of the ritual we have date from the fourth century.<sup>1</sup> The one who was to be purified, after first laying aside his ordinary garments and dressing himself in rags as a suppliant and beggar, descended into a pit. This was covered with planks pierced with holes; then the sacred bull was slain over the planks that his blood, falling on the devotee, might cleanse him and give him freedom from his sin. The recipient endeavored to have every part of his person — especially his eyes, nose, and ears — washed by the cleansing streams; he opened his mouth to catch the falling blood and swallowed it. When he issued forth from the pit, dripping with his horrible purification, he was greeted by his fellow consecrates as one who had been born again. Usually the efficacy of the new birth given by the taurobolium was thought to last only twenty years (renatus in XX annos), at the expiration of which time the ritual apparently might be repeated;<sup>2</sup> once, however, we have the confident assertion that the devotee was “born again for eternity.”<sup>3</sup>

In all these mystic rites there were many common elements. First, all gave assurance of the salvation of the soul through the exact performance of the rites of initiation and through the ritual of service. As we have earlier seen, philosophy, especially Neopythagoreanism and Neoplatonism, aimed at the same object as these

<sup>1</sup> Prudentius, *Persiteph.* 10, 1011 ff.; Anon., *Carmen contra Paganos* 57 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *CIL.* VI, 512, iterato viginti annis expletis taurobolii sui. Probably we should read taurobolio suo.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* VI, 510.



oriental faiths; the means were different but the end was one. The devotee of Mithras, of Isis, of Cybele and Attis, — whatever the god might be — believed that by initiation he had been born into a new life, that the rites which he celebrated had a purifying power, and that they protected him against the assaults of evil spirits. Furthermore his religious life was constantly fed and nourished by membership in a brotherhood which was consecrated and set apart from the rest of the world, as well as by regular services within the shrine of his divinity. Again the gods of Greece and Rome required only occasional and rare service; the Orientals claimed the whole of a man's life: not only at the great festivals but apparently at daily matins and vespers they received the praise and worship of their followers. The priests were no longer civilians, sharing in the ordinary life of their communities, but persons withdrawn for the divine service, distinguished by their dress and by other signs. Moreover these oriental mystic religions were practically universal, in spite of the fact that only men were admitted to the mysteries of Mithras; membership in the sacred associations did not depend on birth, wealth, or learning, but on devotion. Advance in religious proficiency was usually marked by different grades, to which the devotee received a divine call. In these initiations the individual obtained direct revelations which gave him knowledge and freedom. He was made to feel his relation to the universe both visible and invisible, and to find himself in unity with it. Rebirth into a new life, constant support of faith through mem-



bership in a sacred community and by religious services, confident assurance of salvation — these were the common characteristics of the oriental religions which go far to explain their hold on the Roman world in the early centuries of our era.

The question may well be asked how far these religions inculcated morality and what their ethical characters were. It is certainly true that originally they were not moral or concerned with morality any more than most other religions have been; indeed in the stories of Cybele and Attis, of Isis and Osiris, and of many other gods, there were obscene elements almost as offensive to the enlightened ancient as to us. Mithraism on the other hand was singularly free from coarse myths. In time the baser tales were allegorized and their symbolism universally accepted, so that, as St. Augustine tells us, the ancient stories were interpreted to the people for their moral edification. Isis became the ever-present divine mother and kind providence; Serapis was a god of gracious pity toward men; the Great Mother laid aside her wild Phrygian character and changed into the beneficent mother of all Nature, while Attis became the Sun-god, the common symbol of all-embracing divinity. With such changes as these came a response to what we may call secular ethics, and there can be no question that from the second century of our era at least the oriental faiths taught a morality which would win our approval in large measure today. There were indeed many elements in them which made for righteousness. The concept of divinity as a kindly

providence which cared for the individual and exacted the same good qualities from man, the unremitting devotion demanded of the devotees, the sense of moral pollution and the longing for moral purification, the shifting of men's eyes from the material gains of this world to the ideal rewards of the next — all these and many other things gave to the oriental cults distinct and positive ethical and spiritual values. Furthermore, the self-restraint, the gentle asceticism, the obligation to strive unceasingly on the side of righteousness against the evil powers, which these religions imposed, are not to be neglected. Within the religious bodies, whose members were brothers (*fratres*, *consecranei*), the individual learned submission to the head of the society (*pater*), gained self-control and courage for his struggle against the evils of life. No one can read the evidence we possess and not be impressed by the earnestness and devotion of the faithful. That the oriental religions actually contributed to the higher moral and spiritual life of the Roman Empire during the second, third, and fourth centuries is certain.

It is very true that these pagan religions from the East had their charlatans and quacks in abundance, that their noblest elements were often entangled in a mesh of magic, superstitions, and false beliefs; but Christianity too suffered from the same evils. Christianity triumphed because of its own inherent superiority to the other religions, not because its rivals were wholly evil and degrading. To fail to recognize the real moral value of oriental Paganism is to fail to understand the first

centuries of our era, and so to remain blind to the true nature of the world in which Christianity established its greater worth.

Yet even if we were inclined to doubt the value of these religions from our present point of view, there could be no question of their effect upon their devotees. No one who reads the prayer of praise to Isis which Lucius offered before leaving Corinth for Rome, can mistake its sincerity: "O thou holy and eternal protectress of the human race, thou who art ever kind to care for mortals and who showest unceasingly the sweet affection of a mother for the misfortunes of wretched men, neither day nor any night nor even the slightest moment of time passes without thy blessings; thou carest for men on land and sea, thou drivest from them the storms of life and ever extendest a saving hand, wherewith thou unravellest even the inextricable web of Fate; thou assuagest the tempests of Fortune, and thou holdest in restraint the baneful courses of the stars. Thee the gods of heaven above adore, the gods of the world below obey; thou spinnest the sphere of heaven, thou lightest the sun, guidest the universe, and tramplest Tartarus beneath thy feet. To thee the stars make answer, the seasons return, the divinities show their joy, the elements do their service. At thy nod the breezes blow, the clouds send their nourishing rains, seeds swell, and buds increase. Before thy majesty the birds who traverse the heavens are in awe, the beasts that roam the mountains, the serpents that lurk beneath the ground, the monsters that swim the deep. But I

am all too weak in wit to render thy praises, too poor in purse to offer thee due sacrifice; my voice has not the eloquence to express all that I feel concerning thy majesty. Nay, had I a thousand mouths and tongues or eternal continuance of speech unbroken, it were not enough. Therefore will I try to do that which alone a devotee faithful, but poor withal, can accomplish. I will guard the memory of thy divine features and thy most holy god-head deep within my heart's secret shrine and there keep that image forever."<sup>1</sup>

It may have seemed strange to some of you that in this course of lectures we should be considering matters which at first sight appear so alien to Greek thinking as these oriental mysteries. The reason is to be found in the goal toward which we are aiming, for it has been our purpose from the beginning to trace the history of Greek religious thought through to the time when it had in large measure determined the form of Christian thought and had provided the means by which the latter could be made intelligible to the contemporary world. It is necessary therefore to examine the several elements which made up the sum total of the religious thought of the earlier Christian centuries. Moreover, as we have now seen, the purpose of the oriental mysteries was one with the aim of the Greek mysteries and with the object of the Greek mystic philosophies. Therefore we have been obliged to bring into our plan these eastern religions.

But I need not remind you that at this time there was another oriental religion spreading over the world which

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* XI, 25.

we have not yet considered. When Christianity was introduced to the West, it must have presented itself as a new eastern mystery. Men had long been accustomed to such religions; for centuries they had sought either through mysteries such as were celebrated at Eleusis or like those brought in from the East, to find the satisfaction of their hopes for a happy immortality. In these mysteries, as in the mystic philosophies, one of the central ideas was that of the direct vision of the divine which was a revelation of God to man. This act of grace had supplanted, or rather had been added to, the use of the reason or of the will which the philosophers had urged as the means of man's salvation. Through a long course of centuries men had been trained by philosophy, by mystery, and by political events, until an environment had been created which was favorable to the ideas of Christianity — an environment also which was destined to influence profoundly this new religion in its earlier centuries, so that it ultimately received a form different from that foreshadowed in the teachings of its founder. The relation of Christianity to the world into which it entered and some of the reasons for its triumph will be the subject of our final lectures.



## IX

### CHRISTIANITY

**I**N the previous lectures we have traced the development of Greek religious thought from the Homeric poems to the third century of our era; we have seen how Greece extended her intellectual dominion over the entire Mediterranean world which the military and political genius of Rome bound into one empire; and we have examined the chief oriental mysteries which spread throughout the same area. We now turn to Christianity. In dealing with this it will be necessary to review at some length the work of Jesus and the doctrines of Paul, that we may have in mind the material which was later brought into accord with the philosophic thought and the intellectual habits of the Roman Empire outside that district in which Christianity had its birth. But before we do this we should recall some characteristics of the ancient world in the earliest centuries of our era.

In the first place we must realize that it was a Greco-Roman world, one in which the civilizations of two great peoples — the one intellectual, the other political — had been compounded. In the eastern half of the Empire Greek influence dominated. Alexander's conquests had made Greek the common language of a great area with the result that in the East Greek thought and

Greek habits of expression — that is to say, Greek philosophy and Greek rhetoric — were practically native. The West also, as I have earlier tried to show, had received Greek philosophy and Greek rhetoric more than a century and a half before our era, so that indeed over all the Roman Empire common habits of thought and universal modes of expression prevailed. The eastern half of the Empire contained Alexandria, which had been the chief intellectual center from the third century before our era; in the West was Rome, the center of that imperial power which made the world a political unit; yet western thought owed not merely its form but almost its existence to Greek influences.

In the second place the East was the home of the learning of the world. The Greeks furnished the West not only philosophy and rhetoric but the sciences as well. Building on the mathematics and astronomy which they had learned from their Eastern neighbors and the Egyptians they soon developed these two sister sciences. Tradition says that in the sixth century B.C. the philosopher Thales predicted an eclipse of the sun; certainly a century later the Greeks had made great advances; and such were their attainments by the opening of our era that only in comparatively modern times has a new period in the history of astronomy and mathematics begun. In the descriptive sciences of botany and zoölogy especially the Greeks had reached a high position by the fourth century B.C. The work of Aristotle, of Theophrastus, and of others still holds the profound respect of all modern scientists who are familiar

with the history of their subjects. In geography and mineralogy also their accomplishments were not inconsiderable; likewise in many branches of physics they did notable work; while Greek scientific medicine, already highly developed in Hippocrates' day (c. 460-377 B.C.), was further advanced in the succeeding centuries. The works of Galen (129-c. 199 A.D.) remained the authoritative treatises for more than fourteen hundred years. All these sciences the Romans learned from the Greeks, and although in some fields they made notable application of their lessons, they never surpassed their teachers.

Moreover Greece and Hellenized Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt had a knowledge of the conduct of business, of banking, and of the details of administration which they gave to the western half of the Empire. Indeed Roman history between the battle of Actium and the reign of Diocletian from one point of view is the history of the spread of eastern ideas to the West and of their absorption there. Not only did captive Greece take her captor captive, but in a sense Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor won their conquests as well. Many causes operated to further this intellectual domination of the Hellenized East over the Roman West. The eastern provinces had not suffered in the civil wars at the end of the Republic as had many parts of the West; their wealth was not wasted, and in general their social and economic relations were comparatively undisturbed. Under the wise administration of the Emperors these provinces grew richer; their inhabitants, especially the

Greeks among them, gained a consciousness of their own intellectual superiority which they had not had in the last two centuries before our era. The influence of the East, therefore, was in many ways consciously exerted.

Thirdly we must bear in mind that the world was cosmopolitan. For centuries traders had carried not only wares but ideas from one part of the ancient world to another, slaves had done their part, which was not small, since many of them were educated; and from the time of Augustus the soldiers drawn from every province of the Empire exerted a great influence in breaking down the barriers between the nations. For the idea of a cosmopolitan world Stoicism had furnished a philosophic basis; the actuality was realized in large measure by the natural developments under Roman imperial rule. Separate nations had ceased to exist; and in the universal levelling which a growing autocracy produced, the differences between citizens, provincials, and slaves were diminished and an approach was made to a cosmopolitan equality.

Furthermore the Roman world of the first three centuries was virtually a world of peace. Merchants and traders, tourists and missionaries moved freely from one end of the Empire to the other. The value of this Roman peace was recognized by the Christians; near the end of the second century the Christian writer Irenaeus declared: "The Romans have given the world peace and we travel without fear along the roads and across the sea wherever we will."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. haer.* IV, 30, 3.



The world was also one of religious unrest and inquiry. The traditional religions and the inherited forms of religious expression had in large part failed. There was, as has been said in an earlier lecture, a sense of weariness and dissatisfaction which showed itself in the large resort of all classes to Stoic philosophy, in the devotion among the cultured to the mystic philosophies, in conversions to Judaism, and later in the ready reception of oriental religions, including Christianity. We have already seen how both philosophy and mysticism recognized that men had a sense of moral guilt and were conscious of an estrangement from God through sin, from which they desired to secure purification, that is, to attain freedom from the common lot of the bondage of wickedness. Philosophy and mysticism also agreed in holding that the means at man's disposal were not sufficient to accomplish his release, that the reason and the will unaided could not free him, and that therefore external help was necessary — that an act of grace made known by a divine revelation was required. This escape from sin, this freeing of man's spirit, for which they longed, was regarded as a reunion with God, which gave the promise of security and salvation here and hereafter, and which thereby answered man's hope for an unbroken and a perfected existence. It was into a world of such a nature and with such religious thoughts as these that Christianity entered.

But Christianity grew out of Judaism. It will be well therefore to recall briefly to our minds those religious ideas of the Jews to which the mission and the teaching



of Jesus were immediately related. At the beginning of our era a majority of the Jews had abandoned the earlier notion of a golden age, a material kingdom of God, which was to be set up on earth, for a belief in a more spiritual kingdom, which was to be established at some future time either on a transformed earth or in a supermundane heaven. They no longer expected that the whole nation would share in the supreme happiness of this kingdom, but only those individuals who by righteousness and through God's mercy had won a place therein; the wicked were to be either utterly destroyed or punished forever in Sheol. Moreover the Jews generally entertained Messianic expectations of various kinds; they did not, however, look forward with confidence, as their forefathers had done, to the coming of one who should be a national king on earth. There were besides hopes of revelation from God on which we must not pause. Nor is it necessary to speak of the weaknesses of Judaism, its tendency to make the practice of religion a matter of conformity to the minute regulations of the law, its frequent disregard of moral motives, its pride and religious pretence.

All thoughtful readers of the New Testament are aware that within it are represented three stages in the early development of Christianity. In the first the disciples of Jesus formed a group and then a sect within the Jewish nation. The second was that in which the gospel was carried outside Judea into the Roman Empire to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Thus the

transformation of Christianity into a universal religion was begun. In that movement, as we all know, Paul was the chief figure. The third stage was that in which philosophic thought began to operate upon the doctrines of this new religion. It was the period in which Christian theology started to develop; the time in which Christian thought began to be expressed in philosophic form and squared with the philosophy of the day. The fourth Gospel is the document in our canon in which the use of a great philosophic conception for the expression of Christian ideas is first obvious.

Let us now consider briefly the teachings that belong to these three stages, as they are represented by Jesus, by Paul, and by the writer of the Johannine books.

Like every great spiritual teacher Jesus built on the beliefs of his time, refining, enlarging, ennobling, and transforming men's conceptions of God and of his kingdom, of man and of his salvation. His teachings were concrete; he made no attempt to present his views in philosophic form, but inculcated his lessons as occasion offered or required. His words and the history of his life are preserved to us in imperfect and fragmentary forms, having been recorded after his death at a time when his followers had considerably increased in numbers and were to be found at many places outside Judea and Syria. For our present purpose we must confine ourselves to the three synoptic gospels. Of these Mark in essentially its present form was written shortly after 70; Matthew and Luke can hardly be earlier than 80-90 A.D. These gospels are necessarily both historical

and interpretative; their writers were children of their own day and shared in its beliefs and superstitions. They were naturally credulous toward the myths and legends which had rapidly grown up about Jesus. When we consider their great eschatological interest, we realize that the authors actually tell us an extraordinary amount concerning Jesus' life and teachings. The historical interpretation of the gospels must take all these matters into account.

It is impossible to understand Jesus' teachings if we detach them from his person, for in a very real sense he was himself the gospel. Only by grasping so far as possible his personality can we comprehend in any adequate degree the impression which he made on his followers. Their discipleship at the time and the whole development of Christianity after Jesus' death depended on that personality. Nor is there anything strange in this fact; we are in a degree familiar with it in our own experience, whenever any great teacher or leader appears.

Let us now consider Jesus' views as to the nature of God and as to man's relation to him. First of all he taught his disciples that they must regard God as their Father. This idea was by no means new or foreign to the thoughts of his hearers. In the Old Testament we not infrequently find Israel spoken of as the son of God; it was said that God took a special and gracious interest in the people of Israel, that he cared for them wholly, or especially, and that they were his beloved people whom he had chosen to be the agents of his revelation. Jesus

taught that God's fatherhood expresses itself in infinite love for men, that this love extends not only to the righteous but to the wicked as well, so that both receive his care and blessings: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore he showed that the divine care is given to the humblest and smallest parts of the universe, so that the heavenly Father marks even the fall of a sparrow to the ground. The perfect nature of God's love Jesus made the measure of God's perfection; and, although he recognized man's limitations and the moral value of an honest advance in righteousness, he set as man's ultimate goal nothing less than the perfection of God himself as shown in perfect love.<sup>2</sup> Again he gave a new hope to outcasts and sinners by declaring that those who repented of their sins and desired to enter into right relations with God would not be despised. That was the meaning of the parable of the Prodigal Son: it illustrated the generosity of God's affection and showed that it reached to the poorest and worst of men. To realize fully the significance of this teaching we must remind ourselves of the attitude of self-righteous Pharisees not only toward publicans and sinners but toward the common people, association with whom they scrupulously shunned and among whom they hardly admitted that true piety could exist. It was a scandal in their eyes

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* V, 44-45.

<sup>2</sup> *Matt.* V, 43-48; cf. *Luke* VI, 27-36.



that Jesus mingled freely with the classes whose contact was defilement and whose intimacy was shame, while he declared that he came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Man's proper relation to God Jesus held to be the exact converse of God's to man: he taught that man's sonship consists in a likeness to God, which will express itself in love toward God and toward all men. This teaching is nowhere more clearly set forth than in the words which I have just quoted: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven;"<sup>1</sup> the same lesson he inculcated in the prayer which he taught his disciples: "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." On another occasion he charged his followers: "Whosoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against anyone; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."<sup>2</sup> So Jesus held that love and forgiveness, the characteristics of God himself, are required of men as sons of their heavenly Father; that those who wish to claim such a relationship to God must exercise the same generous affection toward their fellows that God shows to them; and that with this must go such love of God as was taught in the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* V, 44-45; *Luke* VI, 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Mark* XI, 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Deut.* VI, 5; *Matt.* XXII, 37; *Mark* XII, 30; *Luke* X, 27.



Salvation Jesus would no doubt have defined in part as peace and confidence of mind in this world and eternal happiness in the next. Our data clearly show that he held that man secures salvation when he enters on the life which belongs to the sons of God, and that the basis of this life, as we have just seen, is love, while its outward signs are acts prompted by whole hearted affection for one's fellow-men and for God. This life Jesus evidently regarded as the natural one from which man departs through sin, and therefore he taught that repentance from sin is the antecedent condition of entrance into right relations with God, that is to say, into salvation. At the beginning of his ministry he preached in Galilee that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand and called on men to repent and to believe in the good news; and at the end of his work he charged his disciples to preach repentance and the remission of sins to all peoples.<sup>1</sup> But it is important that we should keep clearly before us the fact that Jesus did not lay so much emphasis on the negative element of repentance as on the positive motive of love. He taught that the man who had that motive would naturally exhibit it in a trustful dependence on God and in a righteousness of life which would be of a very different character from that of a life directed by mere obedience to legal and ritual requirements. A man whose thoughts and acts were prompted by love of God and of his fellow-men had attained salvation — that is to say, Jesus held salvation to be a present experience, one which could be

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* IV, 17; *Luke* XXIV, 47

realized at any time by any man who recognized God as his father with all which that implied, and who consequently devoted himself to a life of unselfish service. He declared that such a man had already entered into a joy and blessedness which no earthly misfortunes could disturb. Jesus therefore not only gave his followers a sure hope of salvation in the future, when they should realize in heaven the supreme ideal of life and complete happiness, but he also taught them that they could have a real experience of salvation in their present every-day lives.

It should be observed that Jesus laid the greatest stress on the motives for righteousness, and that he paid little attention to the negative and restrictive elements which are inevitably large in any legalistic system of ethics or religion. For him mere external acts and observances were not enough, but righteousness and service must be prompted from within. Furthermore, although the record of his life and teachings show that he attached much importance to the social elements in religion, he dwelt on the responsibility of the individual, who must for himself, by his motives, character, and actions fulfill the requirements for entrance into salvation.

With regard to Jesus' conception of his own person it is difficult to speak with certainty on many points. It is beyond question, however, that he regarded himself as one divinely commissioned to present the fatherhood of God and to set forth man's proper relations to God and to his fellow-men. Faith in the validity of his

commission and in his teachings as showing the way of salvation was required of his followers, for only by such faith could they be moved to transmute his teachings into action. Yet it is intimated that up to the time of his last arrival at Jerusalem Jesus made no effort to be popularly regarded as the Messiah for whom the Jews had looked. When at Caesarea Philippi Peter declared that he was the Christ, Jesus "charged the disciples that they should tell no man."<sup>1</sup> His reasons for such caution seem evident when we consider the varied character of the Jews' Messianic hopes, and the great probability that if he had allowed himself to be recognized as the one whom they expected, his proper work would have been greatly hampered, if not utterly checked. The danger is well illustrated by the incident recorded in John, when the people wished to take him by force and make him king, so that he was obliged to withdraw from them.<sup>2</sup>

But in spite of Jesus' unwillingness to put forward Messianic claims for himself, it is clear that he considered his relation to God as unique in its knowledge and perfection. When he asked his followers to believe on him, he seems obviously to have called on them to trust him as the one who had been divinely commissioned to interpret God to men, and to accept the validity of his teaching as to man's proper relations to God and his fellow-men, that is, as to the life which they should follow as the sons of their Father. The dogmatic

<sup>1</sup> *Matt.* XVI, 13-20; *Mark* VIII, 27-30; *Luke* IX, 18-21. Cf. *Mark* XIV, 61; *Matt.* XXVI, 63.

<sup>2</sup> *John* VI, 15.

associations which today are attached to the idea of a "belief in Christ," obscure Jesus' plain teaching for many. But when his ministry had been brought to its tragic close, his disciples saw him in a new light, and thereafter made his person a matter of supreme moment, as the Church on the whole has done ever since.

Again there has been much debate as to the significance of the sufferings and death of Jesus. From our data we must conclude that Jesus did not give to his passion the interpretation which his disciples naturally gave after the event, and which succeeding generations have given it. Yet toward the end of his ministry Jesus recalled and applied to himself the doctrine that the good may suffer death, not for his own faults, but for the sins of others, as found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; and it seems clear that he regarded his rejection and crucifixion as essential factors in bringing men into the kingdom of God.

What relation now did the teachings of Jesus bear to the religious beliefs and hopes of the Jewish people? Certainly his words on most matters did not appear to his hearers opposed to Jewish doctrines, but rather they seemed to enlarge and to give a nobler content to their own ideas. With the current doctrine that the salvation of the individual depended on his own righteousness he was thoroughly in accord. He gave, however, a deeper meaning to the idea of righteousness: in opposition to the extreme legalistic notions which were emphasized especially by some of the Pharisees, he taught that there must first exist the inner motive of love for God



and man from which alone right actions could flow; that one who had recognized his true relations to God and his fellows and whose transformed character showed itself in filial dependence on God and in loving and generous service towards men, and in the practice of humility, was already delivered from the bondage of sin and had entered into a new spiritual life. Although his contemporaries had abandoned their hopes of a prompt realization of the kingdom of God on earth, Jesus showed that that kingdom was already present in its beginning wherever men displayed the character and did the deeds which belonged to the kingdom — in other words, that the kingdom could be realized here by changing present conditions so that God's will should be done on earth as in heaven. God, to Jesus' mind, was not to be conceived as a king ruling over his people, but rather as a universal loving father, whose affection extended to the wicked as well as to the good, and embraced every class of mankind. He taught further that from this divine love flowed an infinite grace which left no man outside the possibility of salvation. But beyond all these elements in the teachings of Jesus, which, because of their supreme moral demands, made the way of salvation at once most simple and most severe, more than the fact that his teachings dealt primarily with the health of the soul, the personality of Jesus, his belief that he had received a divine commission, and his consciousness of his unique relation to God must be taken into account if we are to understand adequately the effect of his teaching. His



immediate disciples never dreamed of separating themselves from the Jews until events forced them to take that step, but they were filled with the conviction that their Master was the Messiah and that a new revelation had come to them.

After Jesus' death his followers made the central theme of their preaching the proclamation of him as the Christ, who by his sufferings and death had brought salvation to men; they taught that through him men might be delivered from their sin and enter into the blessings promised by his gospel. In general they laid more stress on eschatology than Jesus had done, for they confidently expected an early end of the world and the reappearance of Christ in glory. Quietly no doubt at first they began to make converts in Jerusalem. Then a persecution broke out and conversions were made outside Judea among other peoples than the Jews. About the year 45 a church, largely Gentile, was formed at Antioch,<sup>1</sup> the third city of importance in the Empire. The founding of this church definitely began the expansion of Christianity beyond the bounds of Judaism.

Paul was the chief leader in extending the gospel to the Gentiles, and so much did he overshadow the other missionaries that his work and teaching mark the second period in the history of Christianity. Although no account can here be given of his life and experiences, it is necessary to have these in mind to understand his influence. Especially important is it to remember that

<sup>1</sup> *Acts* XI, 19-26.

he was a trained Jew, familiar with the Old Testament and with the theological doctrines of his people; nor was he unacquainted with the ideas and the language of the Greek world, or untouched by the mysticism of his day. A Roman citizen by birth, a Hebrew of the Hebrews by descent and education, he was well fitted to play his great rôle as the apostle who was to carry Christianity out of Judaism to the Gentiles. He was, however, no systematic theologian to lay down a logical body of doctrine as a Greek might have done, and his writings were all occasional. Furthermore he had not been a companion of Jesus, but was one who believed that by an extraordinary experience he had come directly into knowledge of the risen Christ.

Yet if Paul was not a systematic theologian, he combined with his intense religious devotion a keen habit of mind which made the fundamental elements of his thought stand out clearly. To him Christ's death and resurrection were the great facts of salvation, the means whereby man was redeemed from sin. If we read the Epistle to the Galatians, perhaps the earliest of the Pauline epistles (c. 46-50 A.D.), which contains much autobiographical material, we find certain ideas set forth there which are repeated again and again in his other writings. We can hardly do better than to begin with this letter.

First, Christ is stated to be the redeemer of men from their sins; this is shown by the words of the greeting: "Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that

he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father." The suffering of the good for the sins of others, as we have already seen, was an idea familiar to the Jews, and it was easy for a Jewish convert to relate the death of Jesus to the prophecy in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Paul saw in the death and the resurrection of Jesus the proof that he was the Christ. The vicarious character of Christ's death was probably an element in all apostolic teaching. On it and the mystic indwelling of Christ, Paul wholly based his preaching.

Paul, however, did not teach that the death of Christ in itself saved men without effort on their part; on the contrary he held that man could attain redemption only through faith in Jesus Christ. Now "faith" meant to him something more than mere belief or trust; it was trust marked by an attitude of sympathy with the divine nature and a readiness to receive that nature into one's self so that Christ could dwell in man and the human and the divine natures could be united. In this way to Paul's mind the Jew was set free from the requirements of the law and obtained justification, that is, gained forgiveness of his sins and reconciliation with God. Faith supplanted law, and made men sons of God. So he wrote: "We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh

be justified.”<sup>1</sup> And again: “But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all the sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> This attitude of the apostle was due in part to his own experience, which had shown him the insufficiency of the Jewish law, and also in part to the polemic against Judaism which was a necessary part of his ministry. But his doctrine of justification by faith was not developed for forensic purposes; it was one of his firmest convictions.

When Paul spoke of Christ dwelling in a man, as he frequently did in the Epistle to the Galatians,<sup>3</sup> he meant his words to be taken literally: he held that Christ enters into the man, frees him from the domination of the sinful flesh, and, being a life-giving spirit, brings the Christian from death to life; and that in this way the believer by faith shares in Christ’s death, resurrection, and triumph. Therefore he exhorted the Colossians: “If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gal.* II, 15-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Gal.* III, 23-26.

<sup>3</sup> *Gal.* I, 16; II, 20; III, 27; IV, 19. So *Rom.* VIII, 10. Cf. also 2 *Cor.* IV, 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Col.* III, 1-3.

Faith to Paul's mind was a present union with the risen and glorified Christ; it was for him the means of salvation, or rather it was salvation. As he wrote in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he held that through union with Christ man dies to sin and rises to freedom from the bondage of wickedness; he is reborn a new creature and enters into a new spiritual life.<sup>1</sup>

Closely associated with faith is Paul's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The word itself (*πνεῦμα*) was intelligible to both the Greek and Jewish world, but since Paul was not a systematic theologian, it is a matter of much dispute as to what his exact concept of the Holy Spirit was. He evidently thought of the Spirit as a divine objective reality. In some passages he identifies Christ and the spirit of Christ or the spirit of God;<sup>2</sup> from this we may conclude that he probably thought the Holy Spirit to be a mode of the indwelling Christ. But if his concept is not clear to us, we have no difficulty in understanding his ideas as to the operation of the Spirit. He taught that it is the Spirit which assures men of their sonship so that they may address God as their Father; that it transforms the inner man; and that it demands the sanctification of the body, for the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> From the Spirit come the fundamental virtues — "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance."<sup>4</sup> Thus the Spirit is the means of continuing the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Rom.* VII, 4 ff.; *Phil.* III, 10 f.; and the passages referred to p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *2 Cor.* III, 17; *Rom.* VIII, 10 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Rom.* VIII, 15; *Gal.* III, 26 f.; IV, 6; *1 Cor.* III, 16 f.; VI, 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Gal.* V, 22 f. Cf. *Rom.* XIV, 17.



believer in his course and of perfecting him in the Christian life. In common with his contemporaries Paul of course believed that many ecstatic phenomena — speaking with tongues and prophesying, for example — were the gifts of the Spirit; but his instructions to the excitable Corinthians show his good sense and wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

In all his teaching Paul was highly practical. It is not certain that he held a dualistic view of man's nature in the Greek or Persian sense, but he was well acquainted with the struggle between man's lower and higher natures and he knew the warring elements within the individual. He frequently contrasted the flesh and the spirit, meaning by the first man's sinful nature which keeps him in the bondage of wickedness. From this bondage and consequent death he held that man cannot escape by his own powers; but that Christ delivers man from sin and its consequences. This deliverance is an act of grace, a gift from God. We have only to read the Epistles which bear his name to see how wisely he dealt with actual errors and sins, or stirred to concrete acts of righteousness the members of the churches which he had founded.

In most of his writing Paul dwelt on the present salvation which the mystic union with Christ secured, but at times he treated the eschatological nature of salvation, teaching that the full effects of it would be realized when Christ should come to be glorified in his saints. That this day would come quickly the apostle fully believed; then the faithful, dead and living alike,

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Cor.* XII-XIV.

would receive their full reward and the wicked their punishment.

These, briefly, are the fundamental elements in Paul's doctrine: first, the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus; second, faith which secures the mystic union with Christ; third, the indwelling Holy Spirit, which completes man's redemption and moral regeneration. For all Paul doubtless found warrant in the life and words of Jesus, although he seems to have neglected the ethical teachings of the Master. Paul's views have formed the basis of much of the doctrine of the Church since his time, although his idea of union with Christ through faith soon fell into the background; when it was revived it took on a form very unlike the apostle's teaching.

We have thus far seen two tendencies in Christian thought. The first appears in the synoptic gospels where Jesus is represented as the mediator and teacher, who interpreted to men the universal loving fatherhood of God and showed them their proper relations to God and to their fellow-men; the other is seen in Paul who taught that through the indwelling Christ salvation was secured. It was inevitable that reflective thought should act upon these teachings, and that in the philosophic environment of the Christian churches, at least outside Judea, attempts should be made to apprehend and to formulate in intellectual terms the nature, life, and mission of Jesus — in other words to create a Christian philosophy or theology. When in the period between 50 and 100 A.D., Christianity came into conflict

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with Hellenistic philosophy and theosophy this work of building up a Christian philosophy began. This stage is the third represented in the New Testament.

The so-called Epistle to the Hebrews (c. 90 A.D.) is the first document of the New Testament in which the Greek intellectual habit clearly appears. Although the unknown author was writing to Gentile Christians for practical and not doctrinal ends, there is good evidence that he had been influenced by Alexandrian thought. He presents Christianity as the final and absolute religion, emphasizes Christ's priestly office and his sacrifice, and gives a more philosophical and abstract definition of faith than any other writer of the New Testament. The great example, however, of the effect of the contact of Christianity with Greek thought is furnished by the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles.

This fourth Gospel was apparently written at Ephesus, probably between 100 and 110 A.D., by one who was well acquainted with the philosophy and mysticism of his time; he was also strongly influenced by Paul. If the Johannine Epistles are not by the same author, they represent the same range of ideas as the Gospel, and we are therefore justified in using them together with it.

The fourth Gospel is much more an interpretation than a history of Jesus' person and life; it takes for granted that its readers are acquainted with the facts; and it assumes that the church is one universal body.

Let us now consider the opening words of this Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Here then are two fundamental ideas: first, the eternal existence and divine nature of Christ who is the Word, the Logos of philosophic speech, and second, the revelation of God to man through the incarnate Word — “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The concept of the Logos as the world-reason we saw first appear in the philosophy of Heraclitus; then the

<sup>1</sup> *John I, 1-14.*



idea developed through the centuries until the Logos was equivalent to the reason of God, at once existing in God and being his expression. As such it was a part of Alexandrian thought, being found, for example, in Philo. The Logos of the philosopher, however, was the agent connecting a transcendental god with the divine creation, making and sustaining the world. In so far the Johannine statement is in accord with current thought and expression, although we should probably be wrong if we affirmed that the author was drawing on Philo directly; it is far more probable that he was simply using ideas and language common in the intellectual circles of the day. But if we compare the idea of the Logos in the Johannine prologue with that in Philo we observe a profound and striking difference between the two. For Philo, as we have just said, the Logos was an abstract entity which existed for cosmological purposes; in the Johannine thought, although the Logos is the creator of the world, he is much more: he is incarnate in mortal flesh that he may reveal God to man and bring man salvation. The author wished to show that the creator and revealer were one, that the Logos had appeared as a man on earth. Now this emphasis on the human side of Jesus, the son of God, was in all probability due to the arguments of some incipient Gnostics who denied that the Christ had come in the flesh, and this polemic purpose goes far to explain the abruptness of the prologue. When once the statement has been made the philosophical language dealing with the Logos is dropped; yet the position and emphasis of the ideas



in the prologue were calculated to assure the enlightened readers of the fourth Gospel that the witness of the generation which had seen Jesus was true and must be accepted.<sup>1</sup> The first purpose of the author was to set forth the prime significance of the personal human Jesus, with whom men had lived on familiar terms and from whom they had learned the deepest truths.<sup>2</sup>

How then, according to this writer, does the incarnation of the Word of God in the human Jesus bring salvation to men? The first answer is given by the use of a symbol which is employed in six passages in the Gospel:<sup>3</sup> Christ is the light which lighteth every man; that is, the function of the incarnate Word is to bring the light of true insight, which is knowledge of God, — and Jesus in himself brings that knowledge. So Jesus declared that he was the light of the world, come to illumine the darkness of sin and ignorance in which men dwelt by manifesting the Father to them. He said in answer to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works'

<sup>1</sup> Harnack and some other scholars incline to regard the prologue as "not the key to [the Gospel's] comprehension"; but when we consider the importance which John attaches to the incarnation, it is difficult to separate the body of the book from the opening passage.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 *John* IV, 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> *John* I, 9; III, 19-21; V, 35; VIII, 12; IX, 5; XII, 35-36.

sake.”<sup>1</sup> These words show also that knowledge could come only from belief; hence followed the necessity of believing in Jesus as the incarnation of the Word of God, and in the truth of his teachings. It is the knowledge of the truth thus acquired which sets men free.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the knowledge of God revealed to the believer through faith in Christ was not to the author's mind the sole factor in securing salvation. We have seen how prominent love is in the teachings of Christ, as reported by the synoptic writers; to this element the Johannine writer returned and made it almost preëminent. Love is the definition of God himself in the First Epistle;<sup>3</sup> love was the motive which prompted God to reveal himself to the world through his only begotten son who by that revelation and in his person brought salvation to men.<sup>4</sup> To love one another was the new commandment which Christ gave his followers, and the measure of their love was his love for them; it was also to be the proof to the world that they were his disciples.<sup>5</sup> Love, then, was at once the warrant of their hope and the evidence of the new life into which they were reborn through belief in Christ and acceptance of him as the revealer of God to men.

This new life is expressed in the fourth Gospel as a mystical union with Christ which cannot be distinguished in its essence from that of the Pauline epistles; only the way of entrance into it is differently described. Paul makes faith the gate; although the Johannine

<sup>1</sup> *John* XIV, 9-11.

<sup>2</sup> *John* VIII, 31 ff.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *John* IV, 8, 16.

<sup>4</sup> *John* III, 16-17; 1 *John* IV, 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> *John* XIII, 34-35.

author does not lay less emphasis on faith than Paul,<sup>1</sup> he does not look at it in quite the same way as the earlier writer, and he speaks of the entrance into the true relation with Christ as a new birth — using the same idea as the pagan mystics. The new birth was described as of the spirit, whereas the first was of the flesh,<sup>2</sup> and the believer's vital relation to Christ was symbolized by the figures of the vine, of the bread, and of the water of life.<sup>3</sup>

Pauline influence may possibly be seen also in the Johannine doctrine of the Holy Spirit — at any rate the fourth Gospel shows that at the time it was written a belief in the Holy Spirit was well established, so that the germ of the doctrine of the Trinity was already planted.<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit is variously referred to as the Advocate or Helper, and the Spirit of Truth, which was to be the active agent in edifying believers and rebuking the world when Christ was no longer in the flesh.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the fourth Gospel then was first to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and secondly to bring men to a belief in this fact which would give them life in Christ.<sup>6</sup> The idea that salvation is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *John XX*, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *John III*, 3, 6; cf. *V*, 24.

<sup>3</sup> *John XV*, 1 ff.; *IV*, 7 ff.; *VI*, 33 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2, 15 (c. 180 A.D.), is the first among our extant Greek sources to use the word Trinity (*τριάς*) of the nature of God; Tertullian, *Adv. Valent.* 17 (c. 200), the first Latin writer to employ trinitas in the same sense.

<sup>5</sup> The preparatory discourse put into the mouth of Jesus in *John XIV-XVI* contains the Johannine doctrine. This discourse may be built up from traditional sayings of Jesus, but in its present form it bears unmistakable marks of its literary origin.

<sup>6</sup> *John XX*, 31.

present spiritual experience culminates in the Johannine writings; the doctrine that those who hear and believe have already entered into eternal life is clearly stated.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now summarize the fundamental ideas of primitive Christianity that we have been examining in this lecture. In the first place, because of his nature and his teachings Jesus was regarded as the revealer of God to men, and at the same time, being the Christ, he was held to be their saviour and redeemer. Paul emphasized Christ's death and resurrection, John the incarnation as the great central facts. Secondly, love and faith and their effects on man's relation to God and to his fellow-men were made the essential elements in the Christian life. Thirdly, the doctrine of the mystic union of the believer with the divine Christ and that of the indwelling Holy Spirit were fundamental in both the Pauline and Johannine writings. Revelation, faith, mystic union with the Divine, salvation — our previous studies have shown us that these ideas were both familiar and welcome in the Greco-Roman world of the first century of our era.

We have now reviewed the essential elements in each of the three stages represented in the writings of the New Testament. In the first, the teachings of Jesus show no trace of any influence exerted by Greek philosophic or religious thought. With Paul we begin to detect the signs of such influence — the germs of the doctrine of Logos, for example, are found in the later epistles (Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians), which set

<sup>1</sup> *John* V, 24; *1 John* III, 14.

forth a belief in the eternal existence of Christ, the Son of God. But it remained for the Johannine writer to give a fuller philosophic statement to this doctrine, and in general to bring Christianity well within the province of Greek thought and expression. Thenceforth Christianity belonged to the Greek intellectual world.



## X

### CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM

IN the last lecture we traced the growth of Christianity through the three stages that are represented in the New Testament, and we saw that when the new religion passed beyond the bounds of Palestine and entered on a campaign for converts among the Gentiles, it came into contact with Greek philosophic thought and perforce began to state its doctrines in terms which should be intelligible to educated men. For in spite of the fact that the majority of its adherents — like those of every other contemporary religion — were naturally of humble birth and station, it is certain that from the first it appealed also to men of position and education, and that such were among its followers. Therefore when it put forth its claims to be the universal religion, it had to meet and satisfy the demands of the intellectual classes.

Not only were the various forms of Greek philosophy rivals of Christianity, but the oriental mysteries also proved serious opponents. In our discussion of the most important of these mystery religions in an earlier lecture we tried to show the reasons for the wide appeal which they made during the first two centuries and a half of our era. Christianity therefore had to offer a greater assurance and satisfaction than these religions if it was to make headway against them. Thus Christianity was forced to meet two classes of opponents.

But it was inevitable that while the new religion was seeking to influence the environment into which it had come, it should itself be influenced by the world it had entered. No living belief or institution can exist without being affected by the life of which it is a part. Christianity accordingly ran many dangers, received many accretions, and was in some ways transformed during the first few centuries of its history. In this final lecture we shall consider briefly, by means of significant illustrations, first, the way in which Christianity during the second and third centuries accommodated itself to the intellectual world; secondly, the influence which the pagan environment had on Christian thought; and finally, the causes of its triumph.

By the beginning of the second century it was evident that in its conflict with pagan polytheism and philosophy Christianity could hope to win the victory only by taking into itself the fundamental elements of that intellectual life and civilization which the Greco-Roman world had been establishing through centuries. Its claim that the gospel was universal, that it solved the deepest mysteries and satisfied the highest human aspirations, inevitably brought it into the arena of contemporaneous life. It not only was obliged to defend itself in terms current in Greek thought, and to carry on a successful polemic against polytheism, but it had to prove that it offered the fullest, indeed the only true satisfaction of that longing for salvation which men felt. From these necessities of attack and defense came the Greek Apologists of the second century, the most

important of whom were Aristides, Justin, Tatian, and Athenagoras.

Moreover as the Christian communities multiplied, their members were exposed to many influences which tended to injure or destroy the unity and purity of their belief, so that for self-protection Christianity was forced to develop a formal statement of its faith, that is, to create a dogmatic theology. By formal dogma the common doctrine of the church could be maintained comparatively unimpaired and at the same time the faith could be made intelligible and attractive to the learned of the pagan world. But to give philosophic expression to Christianity's beliefs meant the Hellenization of this religion.

The Gnostics — to whom we shall presently return — were perhaps the first to undertake the construction of a Christian theology, but their aberrations were so extreme and violent that the growing church had to rid itself of them so far as possible. The work of building up a dogmatic system was carried on more slowly in the great catechetical school of Alexandria.

We have already seen the beginning of both the apologetic and the theological movements in the Pauline and Johannine writings of the New Testament. Let us now consider the work of the Apologists of the second century.

These defenders were all educated converts; indeed some of them, like Aristides and Athenagoras, called themselves philosophers. Naturally they did not give up their philosophic custom when they went over to

Christianity, but rather applied their intellectual habit to their new faith. We should be wrong, however, in thinking that they wished to reconcile Greek philosophy and Christianity; on the contrary they wished to show that Christianity was the only true philosophy. Still all, with the exception of Tatian, treated Greek philosophy and civilization with respect and were ready to recognize God's revelations among the Greeks as well as the Jews. They labored, however, with the fundamental antagonism between revelation and reason, and were often obliged somewhat illogically to blame Greek thinkers while praising them. Yet the sway of Hellenic philosophy was so complete and the means of defense which it furnished so powerful, that the Christians readily disregarded logical difficulties and gladly used the weapons which pagan thought had forged.

It is impossible here to distinguish in full detail the contributions of the several Apologists; we must therefore be content with a summarized statement of their positions.

First of all they accepted the historic tradition of the person, work, and teachings of Christ as authentic, and made no attempt to enlarge or diminish that tradition. They endeavored rather to present Christianity as a rational religion in such a way as to win the approval of the intellectual world. As Harnack says: "These Christian philosophers formulated the content of the Gospel in a manner which appealed to the common sense of all the serious thinkers and intelligent men of the age. Moreover, they contrived to use the positive



material of tradition, including the life and worship of Christ, in such a way as to furnish this reasonable religion with a confirmation and proof that had hitherto been eagerly sought, but sought in vain."<sup>1</sup>

They all set forth Christianity as a revelation from God, given in the Old Testament through the inspired prophets, who had foretold the supreme revelation in Jesus Christ. Christianity therefore was something which had existed from the beginning of the world; it was a thing which revelation had continuously attested, and which consequently was ultimate truth.<sup>2</sup> According to Justin not only the prophets of the Old Testament but also the Greek philosophers had borne witness to the truth and had been in a measure Christians. This power of insight and of prophecy he would ascribe in the latter case as in the former to the operation of the reason of God, a seed of which was granted to every man by nature; all therefore that was reasonable in Greek thought was due to divine inspiration. He found the cause of the Greeks' failure to expound the whole truth in the view that man's natural endowment was insufficient to enable him to resist the evil demons which beset him.<sup>3</sup> Although Athenagoras did not say that every man had within him a germ of the divine wisdom, he no less

<sup>1</sup> *History of Dogma*, II, 170.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Justin's arguments, *Apol.* I, 31-53. Athenagoras, *Legat.* 9, limits himself to the testimonies of the prophets as to the nature of God. Cf. also Tatian, 20, at the end.

<sup>3</sup> Justin, *Apol.* II, 8 ff.; cf. I, 46. In two passages (*Apol.* I, 44 and 59) Justin illogically declares that the Greeks owed all their true knowledge to their borrowings from Moses. Herein he was simply following the Alexandrian Jews.



than Justin granted that the pagan poets and philosophers had known the truth in part;<sup>1</sup> their errors had been due to their dependence on themselves. The full truth then was to be found in revelation, which gave the Apologists the sole and sufficient warrant of their faith and the complete rule of life.

But, as I have said, the Apologists represented Christianity as the one valid philosophy. We must now examine briefly its principles.

First as to the nature of God. In dealing with this subject the Apologists used a method of thought and of expression very much like that employed by Philo and the later Platonists. They contrasted God and the world: the latter they said was created, temporal, and conditioned; the former, unconditioned, eternal, and self-existent; the material world was apprehended by the senses, God by the mind and reason alone.<sup>2</sup> God, therefore, to them was the One, pure spirit, unchanging, requiring nothing. It followed from this idea of God that he must be regarded as supramundane, if not transcendent. As a matter of fact, these writers were perhaps unconsciously trying to reconcile the personal attributes of God the Father, which the common Christian faith ascribed to the Godhead, and the current concept of God as a transcendent and ineffable being. A variety of expressions, too numerous to be quoted here, was employed to suggest God's exalted and perfect nature. Furthermore God was not regarded

<sup>1</sup> *Legat.* 7.

<sup>2</sup> Tatian, *Orat.* 5; cf. Athen., *Legat.* 4. The ideas recur frequently in nearly all the Apologists.

as a passive, but as a living and active spirit, who must express himself in creations; he was therefore the First Cause, the Lord, Father, and Creator of all. The perfection of his nature made him also the source of moral good.

The complete contrast between the perfect, supra-mundane God and the imperfect, transient world required the Apologists, like the later pagan philosophers, to postulate some agent connecting the two, and they, like Philo and others, found this in the Logos, which to them was the operative reason of God, regarded as a person. But there is this significant fact to be noted, that the Apologists reached their views with regard to God and the Logos from a contemplation of the world itself in which they saw reason and order, and detected spiritual forces working toward good ends. Therefore they believed that the world was created and directed by God's reason. Reflection on the chain of rational causation had led them to their conclusions. But Philo and the later Platonists we might say conceived of the Logos as a remedial being, for through his mediation they saved the perfection of God from contamination with evil matter. To the Apologists, however, matter was only an indifferent finite substance.

The Logos, as the reason of God, was identical with God in essence; but as a projection by God from himself, made for the purpose of creation and revelation, the Logos had a being distinct from God, not in essence but in number, so that he was a second God; yet at the same time the Logos, being a mode of God, God's

operative reason, was included in God; therefore no polytheistic ideas were admitted here.<sup>1</sup>

The Logos then was regarded as a creature and a servant of God, but he was held to be above all other creatures, being one in essence with the Divine. Moreover being created and therefore finite from the point of view of time, the Logos could enter into the finite and thus do the work of creation and revelation; by the Logos the world was made out of finite matter, and man was endowed with reason and freedom of the will. It is a striking fact, however, that with the exception of Justin, the Apologists betray comparatively little interest in the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus Christ. Their efforts were directed rather to establishing against the pagan world their claim that God is One and that the Logos is the operative reason of God which exercises his powers. Furthermore they had little or nothing to say about the Holy Spirit as a separate person, but for the most part they identified the Logos and the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of evil the Apologists solved by connecting it with a belief in the freedom of choice given spirits or angels who chose to depart from righteousness, and, thus becoming evil demons, have from the first beset man and still do beset him with temptations which cause him to sin. They regarded man, by virtue of his endowments of reason and of freedom of the will, as capable of immortal life or of complete death. The

<sup>1</sup> [Justin] *Dial. cum Tryphone* 61, 62, 105, 128; Tatian, *Orat.* 5-7; Athen., *Legat.* 10, 16, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Justin, *Apol.* I, 5, 13, 61, 65, 67; *Dial.* 7, 29, 116; Tatian, *Orat.* 13; Athen., *Legat.* 10.

conditions of immortality were first, the maintenance of the knowledge of God and of his relation through the Logos to the created world, and secondly, persistence in a life aimed at moral perfection, a life which followed after the Spirit and did not yield to the bodily passions. In Tatian especially there is a distinct ascetic strain.<sup>1</sup>

The best exposition of man's moral obligations the Apologists believed to be found in the words of Jesus, but at the same time they agreed in holding that the essential element in a life of virtue was a clear knowledge of divine things through which man was at once raised above the things of this world into a pure and noble existence. Thus man was assured now of salvation, and in the future life was destined to enjoy immortality and the perfection of knowledge which would come with the direct vision of God.<sup>2</sup>

But such a doctrine presupposes a revelation of God. This, as I have already pointed out, the Apologists said had been made in the beginning by the Logos who disclosed himself in the created universe and in man as a part thereof. Man, however, by yielding to sin, had lost that divine knowledge which had been his through the original revelation, with the result that repeated revelations had been necessary. The agents of these had been the inspired prophets of the Old Testament and to a slight degree the philosophers of Greece. The revelation of the Logos in Jesus Christ was simply an attestation and guarantee of the truths and predictions

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Apol.* I, 5, 15, 21, 56; II, 5-7; Tatian, *Orat.* 7 f., 11; Athen., *Legat.* 24 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Justin, *Apol.* I, 15 ff., and often in the apologetic writings.



of the prophets, the highest stage in the history of revelation, confirming that revelation without changing its content in any way.

But all this is something very different from the teachings of Jesus, or of Paul, or of the Fourth Gospel; indeed the relations of the Apologists to Stoicism, to Philo and the later Platonists, seem fully as close as to the New Testament. Of the writers in question Justin alone — and he somewhat unsuccessfully — tried to set forth Jesus as the redeemer in the strict sense of the word and to see in him a unique revelation of the Logos.<sup>1</sup> Side by side with the tendency to seek religious satisfaction in mysticism there existed even more strongly in intellectual circles a desire to find the principles of right conduct in a correct theory of the world. Such was, for example, the aim of the Stoic. In attempting to satisfy this desire the Apologists probably represented the views of the majority of educated Christians of their day who felt that the noble morality of Christianity was its most edifying characteristic; at any rate they knew that it was the strongest argument for the validity of their religion.

We have already seen many times that the idea that supreme knowledge was conferred by direct revelation and that such knowledge led to perfection was widespread not only among later Greek thinkers and Hellenized Jews like Philo, but also among the devotees of the oriental mysteries. Lucius, the hero of Apuleius'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Apol.* I, 23, 63; II, 6.



Metamorphoses, believed that through the rites of initiation into the mysteries of Isis he had been allowed to see the gods face to face and to acquire a knowledge which only such revelation could convey.<sup>1</sup> Magical papyri describe their contents as knowledge (*γνῶσις*), meaning thereby the supernatural knowledge which they impart. From the other extreme we can cite the case of the Apostle Paul, who claimed that his knowledge and the gospel which he preached had come to him not from man, but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> It was then a common belief of the day that through direct revelation one might obtain a secret knowledge (*γνῶσις*) of divine things which no teaching could give. Such a revelation, however gained, was recognized as an act of grace toward men, whereby they attained salvation.

It was this idea of a secret revealed knowledge which gave the name of Gnostic to a series of movements in the early Christian centuries to which we must now turn.

The Gnostics never formed any single community or school, but they comprised groups which exhibited the greatest diversity and range of beliefs and of morals; the most famous and influential individuals were Basilides, who taught at Alexandria in the time of Hadrian, and Valentinus, who was active at Rome in the middle of the second century (c. 140-c. 165). Gnosticism did not originate within Christianity, but rather antedated it. All its forms arose from some combination of oriental religions and mythologies with Greek modes of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Gal.* I, 11-12; *Eph.* III, 3-4.

philosophic thought, which in many ways remind one of later Neoplatonism. When Christianity was taken into the Gnostic systems, it was inevitable that it should be modified, reshaped, and stated in forms which might contain gross error. Yet it would be a mistake to regard the Gnostics as fundamentally foes of Christianity. Even if we cannot go so far as Harnack and call them "the theologians of the first century," and attribute to them the first place in the early formation of a Christian theology,<sup>1</sup> we must recognize that they did a great, and in some ways a permanent, service to the new faith. They were seekers after a philosophy of history; they interpreted Christianity as the religion which replaced both paganism and Judaism, and they held that the appearance of the redeemer had completed the development of the human race and had consummated the history of the universe. Such a view, which in itself was quite in accord with the views of Christians generally, led the Gnostics to reject the Old Testament because it was supplanted by the new revelation; the Apostolic writings they believed to contain first of all the rule of faith when taken at their face value, and secondly to hold a secret and deeper meaning, which could be obtained only by allegorical, that is, by esoteric interpretation. But thus far the Gnostics and the mass of Christians were still in essential agreement, although the latter held to faith (*πίστις*) as the basic element in their religion, while the former exalted knowledge (*γνῶσις*) above it.

<sup>1</sup> *History of Dogma*, I, 222 ff.

The Christians, however, commonly believed the world to be the creation of God and wholly subject to him, as we just now saw when examining the position of the Apologists. The Gnostics on the other hand almost universally adopted some form of dualism which set off God and matter against each other as more or less independent entities. In matter they saw the basis of evil; at the other pole was the perfect supreme Being who was wholly transcendent, above all thought; from this Being, according to Basilides, proceeded a series of emanations, no less than three hundred and sixty-five in number, the lowest of which were the angels who occupy the visible heaven; they were the creators and rulers of all things on earth. The chief of these angels was the God of the Jews, as he was made known in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Valentinus, too, described a series of thirty Eons, descended from the perfect, pre-existent Eon and his feminine counterpart, Ennoea, in which appear fantastic combinations of abstract ideas, mathematical concepts, and conjugal relations, betraying the manifold origin of this bizarre system.<sup>2</sup> Yet such doctrines represent only extravagant efforts to bridge the gap between a transcendent God and the world, a task which Philo and the later Platonists accomplished in a more restrained manner.

The common Gnostic explanation of the origin of the universe was that the cosmos arose from the descent into matter of some sparks of the divine. The Creator of the cosmos, the Demiurge, was regarded as an inter-

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I, 24, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I, 1-3.

mediate creature, sometimes as an evil one; but he is never identical with the supreme Being.<sup>1</sup>

Man, also, in their views, was a dual creature, made up of corruptible flesh and divine spirit. Some Gnostics also divided mankind into two classes: the spiritual who were capable of salvation, and the material who were doomed to perish. The Valentinians, however, conceived of three kinds, corresponding to the three forms of existence found throughout the world: the spiritual, the animal, and the material. Of these the material men were predestined to destruction; the animal by right choice might find rest in an "intermediate space"; but the spiritual were to attain perfection and become "as brides to the angels of the Saviour."<sup>2</sup> The Gnostics of course were spiritual and destined for the supreme bliss.

As regards their views concerning the person of Christ we may not now go into detail. We can simply state the views of the two chief Gnostics. Basilides identified Christ with the first-born of the Father, the emanation Mind (*Noûs*), who came to destroy the God of the Jews and all evil men, but to save those who believed on him.<sup>3</sup> Valentinus made Christ one of the Eons, forming a conjugal pair of Christ and the Holy Spirit; but Jesus who appeared on earth was another, the perfect product of the whole *pleroma* of Eons.<sup>4</sup> We may say

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ptolemaeus, apud Epiphanius, *Haer.* XXXIII, 3-7, *Epist. ad Floram*, at the beginning.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I, 5-8. The Valentinian idea of the triple nature of man is as old as Plato.

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I, 24, 2-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 2, 5-6.



that generally Christ was regarded by the Gnostics as one of the emanations of the supreme Being, by which the divine principle entered the visible world and made God known, whereas he had been hidden hitherto. Christ, therefore, was a power, a heavenly Eon, which was to be distinguished from his earthly appearance as the man Jesus. This view was in accord with other beliefs that Christ had not actually appeared and suffered in the flesh, to which is given the name docetism.

The Gnostic ethics were based on the dual concept of man, with the natural result that in many groups a marked asceticism was practised. On the other hand the belief that the revelation brought by Christ had freed men from law — an exaggeration of Paul's position, unchecked by Paul's good-sense — led to the extremes of libertinism.

The Gnostics laid much stress also on the magic value of the sacraments of baptism, the Lord's supper, and anointing with oil. They treated them as the means of initiation into the holy mysteries of Christianity, whereby the initiate obtained, as in pagan mysteries, the higher knowledge (*γνῶσις*), which was salvation. Beyond this they resorted to the crassest magic, playing with names and numbers, employing images, incantations, invocations, and many kinds of curious arts.<sup>1</sup> But in this respect they were hardly in disaccord with their contemporaries.

From the foregoing it will appear that the Gnostic movement represented in general exaggerations of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I, 23, 4; 24, 5.



normal Christian tenets, produced by an attempt to combine Christianity with many Greek and oriental elements. The results varied from a doctrine which differed from that, for example, of the Johannine writings chiefly in denying the actual human existence of Christ, to the most extravagant perversions of Christian belief. Many Gnostics remained within the Church undisturbed, others were bitterly attacked.

The entire movement which we have been considering is instructive, for it illustrates in a striking way the danger which the growing Church ran of being swamped in the confused floods of Hellenic and oriental thought and mysticism. The conflict with such foes as the Gnostics was one of the chief causes that led to the formation of a body of accepted catholic doctrine, for in dogma lay in part the protection of Christianity. Although the Church was able to free itself of most Gnostic heresies, she could not wholly escape their influence, as we shall presently see.

The heir of both the Gnostics and the Apologists was the catechetical school at Alexandria under the leadership of Clement and Origen (c. 200-231). The early history of this school is unknown, but it became important at the close of the second century. In it both the Greek sciences and the holy Scriptures were studied, so that it was a natural place for the fusion of secular learning and Christian theology.

Clement, who was first a pupil, then a teacher in this school, and at last its head for three years (200-203),

was the first to attempt an exposition of Christianity with all the aid that heretical speculation and Greek learning alike could give. We possess from his hand three works of systematic edification. The *Protrepticus* is addressed to converts, and in it he employs arguments similar to those of the Apologists, Justin and Athenagoras; the *Paedagogus* gives practical directions for the Christian life; and the *Stromateis*, "Miscellanies," is intended to present and establish Christianity as the true philosophy, and so to lead the reader to supreme knowledge (*γνῶσις*), as its full title announces.<sup>1</sup> From this it is at once evident that the Gnostic movements had had their influence on Clement; and indeed, after combatting Gnostic errors frequently, especially in the third book, he devotes a considerable part of his sixth book and the whole of his seventh to a presentation of the true Gnostic.<sup>2</sup> His view as to the service done mankind by the Greek intellect is summed up in the often-quoted words: "Philosophy was a tutor to bring the Greeks, as the law was to bring the Hebrews, to Christ."<sup>3</sup>

But since it was Clement's great pupil and successor, Origen, who actually founded Christian theology as a philosophy, and who established his views so firmly that although the Church has rejected much in detail, its dogmas still bear the stamp of his system, we shall pass at once to him and endeavor to set

<sup>1</sup> Τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφίαν γνωστικῶν ὑπομνημάτων στρωματεῖς.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also *Strom.* II, 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Strom.* I, 5, 28, 3; cf. I, 20, 97; VI, 7, 59.

forth in summary the most important elements of his doctrine.

Origen held fast to the traditional teaching of the Apostles and to the Old Testament which he felt contained the sum of Christian truth,<sup>1</sup> and at the same time he worked freely as a speculative thinker. For the greater part of the period during which he was the head of the Alexandrian School, (c. 203-231) he was undisturbed by persecution and could work in the clear atmosphere of scientific study. His theology was built on the secular theology of his day.<sup>2</sup>

God he regarded as wholly transcendent, but potentially everywhere present, incomprehensible to man save in so far as man could behold the revelation of him in nature and in Christ. He predicated justice, goodness, and omnipotence of God, not simply as potentialities, but as attributes exercised fully and eternally in the universe. Still to leave man a free agent, Origen was obliged to hold that God limited his own omnipotence. The belief in the eternal exercise of God's attributes required him to regard creation as eternal, so that he held that God and his creatures had eternally existed; God therefore, he said, had never existed apart from his creation, but the two were coëternal. This does not mean that Origen regarded the present world as existing in visible form from eternity, for he taught quite the contrary: this present world did begin and will

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *De prin. Praef. 1.*

<sup>2</sup> Tradition says that Origen heard the discourses of Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neoplatonic School. Porphyry. *apud Euseb. H. E. VI, 19, 6.*

end in time, but it is only one in an infinite series of worlds, a single expression of the eternal creative activity of God.<sup>1</sup>

The Logos in Origen's system stands midway between God and the world. In opposition to those who claimed that the Logos had been begotten in time and was therefore a temporal creature, he insisted that the Logos was without beginning, but was eternally generated by God. In attempting to make his view clear he employed familiar figures, saying that the Logos, the eternal Son, was related to the Father, as the gleam to the source of light, or the will to the mind of man. He was the wisdom, the consciousness, and the activity of God; and he likewise was God's perfect image, a second God. Yet in essence he was not independent, but rather one with the Father by whose will he was eternally created. Being created, however, he was one stage removed from God toward the multiple creation; being the medium of the Divine, he was the Creator of the world.<sup>2</sup>

It will be observed that in this philosophical system there is no necessity for the redeemer, and indeed Origen made somewhat less use of this concept of Christ than most other writers. On Christ's incarnation he insisted, but the essential work of the human Christ was revelation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De prin.* I, 1; III, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *De prin.* I, 1 and 2 deal with God and Christ respectively in a systematic way; cf. also II, 5 and 6. Besides there are many passages in Origen's extant works, too numerous for reference here, which show his views.

<sup>3</sup> *De prin.* II, 6.

Nor did Origen's system require the Holy Spirit, but to comply with the Christian belief he gave the Spirit a place with God the Father, and Christ the Son, and made him the inspirer of the prophets and apostles. The functions of the three persons in one, so far as man is concerned, he defined by saying that God gave man existence, the Son supplied reason, and the Spirit holiness. Although he held the Spirit to be of the eternal essence of God, he made him subordinate to the Son, being the first creation through the Logos. Thus Origen in reality established two stages of creation: the Logos and the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Below these he placed an infinite number of lesser spirits, endowed with freedom and bound for a time with matter: angels, men, and demons. By the exercise of their freedom certain spirits have fallen from perfect holiness and, entering into bodies, have become the souls of men, aided by those spirits which have held fast to purity and are God's angels, and hindered by the demons who have fallen lower than men and who prefer evil and find pleasure in it.<sup>2</sup> The chief of the fallen angels is the devil.<sup>3</sup> Yet the world is ruled by divine providence toward ultimate good; evil therefore will not finally conquer: men who now choose the good become the sons of God and rise to the rank of angels.

<sup>1</sup> *De prin.* I, 3; II, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Origen adopted the popular belief in the existence of angels and demons and made great use of it in explaining the present state of the world. The passages in his works are too numerous to be all named here; but *De prin.* I, 8, entire is devoted to the topic.

<sup>3</sup> *C. Cels.* IV, 65; *De prin.* I, 5.



Ultimately, by a process which will go on imperceptibly through countless ages, even the evil spirits will be brought back to God and so all wickedness shall be purged away.<sup>1</sup> Then this course will begin again.

Origen's human psychology was probably taken from his teacher Clement; but the views of both, like those of the Gnostics, go back ultimately to Plato.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly Origen held that the human body has two souls, the first the animal or the passionate, the second the reasonable soul or the spirit. The latter is man's divine essence which enters him from above; the former becomes his at the time of his conception.<sup>3</sup> To human spirits, as to all others, God granted freedom, and through their evil choice they fell, so that all men are born in a condition of sin. The duty of man is to endeavor to give his divine soul the mastery in him that he may thereby become like God and attain eternal happiness; his inherent sin must be overcome by his own will and determined aspiration. Not that Origen believed that man could fully accomplish his own salvation; on the contrary he held most firmly that divine grace was needed; but he maintained that the first step, an act of faith, did depend on the individual's free choice.<sup>4</sup> The historical revelation of the Logos and the redemptive work of Christ, who by his death dealt the first blow in the struggle to overthrow the devil, were both made a part

<sup>1</sup> *De prin.* III, 6; cf. I, 5, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Clement, *Paed.* III, 1, 1. *Strom.* V, 14, 94; VI, 16, 134 f. Cf. Plato, *Rep.* IV, 436 A-441 C; *Tim.* 42 A.

<sup>3</sup> *De prin.* III, 4; cf. II, 8.

<sup>4</sup> *De prin.* III, 1; *In Matt.*, ser. 69; *in Rom.* IV, 5; IX, 3.

of the plan of salvation by Origen, although, as I have said, redemption is not logically an indispensable element in his system.<sup>1</sup>

There are three stages of Christian progress, according to Origen. In the first and lowest man may advance through faith and by a belief in the redemptive death of the historic Christ to a state of sinlessness and to fellowship with God. Here the Logos incarnate in Jesus acts through revelation and redemption as a physician to cure men of their sins. But beyond is a higher stage in which through love and knowledge the soul may mount from its view of the phenomenal world to the "invisible things of God," that is, to an understanding of the whole creation; and still further soar from these upward to "the eternal power of God, in short, to God's own divinity." In these higher stages the Logos is the teacher of the divine mysteries; they make the contemplative life in which the Christian may obtain perfect knowledge. To such a Gnostic as the Christian becomes who has been granted the vision, the historic Christ is no longer significant; the Logos in his manifold revelations teaches him the supreme truth.<sup>2</sup>

Thus we see that Origen assumed that there were two forms of Christianity, an exoteric for the mass, who were capable only of faith and who could not grasp the deeper truths, and an esoteric, reserved for the few who could understand the mysteries of God and whose souls could rise to the knowledge of God himself. This double view

<sup>1</sup> *C. Cels.* VII, 17; cf. I, 31; *Exhort. ad Mart.* entire.

<sup>2</sup> *C. Cel.* III, 59-62, VII, 46. Cf. *in Joh.* I, 20-22; *C. Cel.* II, 66.69; IV, 15.18; VI, 68.

depended in part on his Gnostic tendencies, in part on his interpretation of Scripture, to which we shall presently turn.

We have now followed the development of Christianity from the simple teachings of Jesus into a Greek philosophy, as illustrated by the later writings of the New Testament, the Apologists, the Gnostics, and Origen. The last of these completed the process which began in Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, for he united successfully and fully the religious principles of the Christian religion with the content of Hellenic philosophy. It must be evident furthermore that Origen and those who prepared the way for him, were no less debtors to the Greeks than they were to the Hebrews, to Jesus, and to Paul, since the form and in no small degree the very matter of their philosophy had been provided by secular thought. Indeed Porphyry with some reason charged Origen with being more Greek than Christian.<sup>1</sup>

It will be observed that Origen, and his predecessors also in large measure, made man's salvation a part of a philosophy of the entire universe, each portion of which was to be fully understood only through a comprehension of the whole. That is to say, the scheme of salvation was an element in cosmological speculation. The earliest Greek philosophers had been concerned with a solution of the physical cosmos; soon thinkers began to search for the causes of change, without, however, troubling themselves with ethics or religion; but from the end of the fifth century B.C., the position of man, his obligations

<sup>1</sup> Apud Euseb. *H. E.* VI, 19, 7 f.

and his happiness, the nature of the Divine and the relation between God and the world, became dominant themes. In Plato we see first fully developed a religious philosophy of the cosmos of which man's salvation is an inseparable part. The line from Plato to Origen, and we may add to the present day, is unbroken. Thus we find that Greek philosophy furnished the general plan for a statement of Christianity which should not only be intelligible, attractive, and convincing to the learned and the simple alike, but which should also prove triumphant over the Gnostics and other aberrant thinkers.

This transformation of the rule of faith into an Hellenic philosophy was contemporaneous with the growth of the separate churches into one body politic with an organization fitted for present defense and for future aggression.

If space allowed, numerous illustrations might be adduced to show how pagan philosophy and mysticism had influenced Christian theologians in details. Many examples we have already seen in passing, such as the view held by both Clement and Origen, as well as by the Gnostics and perhaps by Paul, that the supreme Christian truth was to be obtained by direct revelation, by a vision of the Divine. This was a current belief not only in the later mystic philosophies, like Neopythagoreanism and Neoplatonism, but also in the mystic religions, and in the Greek mysteries likewise. Again it would be possible to show that Origen's ethical system



owed much more to Stoicism and to later Platonism than to the teachings of Christ, which, however, were easily brought into accord with the philosophers' doctrines. Or once more we might enlarge on the development of the triune nature of God, whereby the transcendent God and the Logos of pagan theology were united with a varying concept of the spirit of God, also familiar in Hellenic thought, to produce the Trinity of Christian dogma.

Thus in examining the ways in which Christianity accommodated itself to the intellectual world for purposes of defense and conquest, we have been seeing many examples of the influence which the pagan environment had on Christianity. Let us now examine a few further illustrations.

The first of these shall be the method of interpretation which was applied to the sacred writings. As early as the sixth century B.C., the Homeric mythology had aroused a protest from Xenophanes and others;<sup>1</sup> and in defense a new form of interpretation was adopted by the supporters of Homer who declared that there was a deeper meaning to the myths than appeared on the surface. Theagenes of Rhegium (c. 525 B.C.) suggested that the Homeric gods expressed either human faculties or natural elements, and thus he began the long history of allegorical exegesis.<sup>2</sup> From this time such interpretation of myths became a common practice; it was adopted by the Stoics; at Alexandria Jewish scholars

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 119 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Schol. Venet. ad *Il.* XX, 67.



took it over and applied it to the writings of the Old Testament, so that before the beginning of our era the sacred writings were regularly so explained. Philo shows how universal the procedure was. By it of course the historical character of the Old Testament was thrust into the background, and thus many difficulties of interpretation were avoided which otherwise would vex a man who regarded every part of the sacred books as perfect. Naturally the early Christians followed their predecessors, and in fact allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament has lasted down to our own time. Origen helped to fix the standard system, so to speak; there were, according to him, three senses in which the Scriptures were to be understood, corresponding to the triple nature of man: first, the literal sense which was for the "flesh," the simple man; secondly, the psychic which fitted the moral man; and finally the pneumatic sense, for the spiritual man.<sup>1</sup>

The development of Christian asceticism will serve as another illustration of our present theme. It will be remembered that the Orphics and the Pythagoreans imposed on their followers a mode of life in which certain things were forbidden. These two sects were the first to grasp the meaning of the dualism of the flesh and spirit that we have found so important throughout the course of our investigation. Plato and the later philosophic schools developed the higher significance of man's dual nature until asceticism in greater or less degree became the normal regimen for the philosopher

<sup>1</sup> *De prin.* IV, 11 ff.

of almost every school. In the oriental religions also certain abstentions were required as preparation for initiation into their mysteries.

On the whole asceticism was foreign to both Judaism and early Christianity.<sup>1</sup> In the Pauline epistles it is true that we find passages in which the flesh and the spirit are contrasted; virginity is moderately approved in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, but the Epistle to the Colossians contains a direct argument against the errors of ascetic teachers in Asia Minor, and the non-Pauline First Epistle to Timothy combats celibacy and vegetarianism.<sup>2</sup> It was indeed somewhat difficult to find a satisfactory warrant for an ascetic life in the New Testament. Christianity, however, could not escape its environment. Presently in the second century certain sects like the Gnostics, Montanists, and Encratites appeared which laid great stress on ascetic practice; at the same time the habit of fasting generally increased; many bound themselves to perpetual virginity; and riches were regarded as incompatible with the highest Christian character. In the third century numbers began to withdraw from the world, and by the fifth century monasticism was established in both the East and the West. But it was paganism which had given men the ideal of the ascetic saint, and the Church writers who furnished the warrant for the Christian practice drew their arguments from Greek philosophers, and

<sup>1</sup> The Essenes seem to have been a Jewish sect strongly under the influence of Orphic and Pythagorean ideas. Neither they nor the Therapeutae influenced Judaism or Christianity to any considerable extent.

<sup>2</sup> *1 Cor.* VII entire; *Col.* II, 20-23; *1 Tim.* IV, 1-3.

sometimes found it difficult to meet the criticisms of the Jewish defenders of a normal human life.

The almost universal rite of baptism as a means of ritual purification was employed by the early Christians. Jesus had been baptized by John, but he never made baptism a condition of discipleship. The Apostles baptized with water immediately after conversion. Confession of sins, repentance, and the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ were the antecedent requirements; the act itself was believed to mark the remission of sins and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. But by the early second century we find that the convert went through a period of instruction and was obliged to fast before he could be baptized.<sup>1</sup> From the middle of this century a new group of ideas drawn from the mysteries was associated with the rite. It became a mystery (*μυστήριον*), the one who conferred it was a mystagogue (*μυσταγωγός*); many forms of speech used in pagan initiations were employed; and the pagan expression "enlightenment" (*φωτισμός, φωτίζεσθαι*) became a Christian term. Likewise those who had been initiated into the Christian mysteries were said to bear a seal (*σφραγίς*) on their foreheads.<sup>2</sup> In general it was commonly thought that baptism — the Christian initiation — had a magic power to secure salvation similar

<sup>1</sup> *Didache* 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Clement, *Protrep.* 12; *Paed.* I, 6; *Strom.* II, 3. Although we cannot be quite certain that *φωτισμός* and *σφραγίς* were technical terms of the Greek mysteries, they undoubtedly corresponded to ideas and practices found in both Hellenic and oriental mystic religions. For a full list of authorities see the works of Hatch, Anrich, Wobbermin, and Clemen named, p. 368.

to that which the pagan initiatory ritual was believed to possess. Moreover a long period of preparation was required, a sharp distinction was made between those who had received this Christian initiation and those who had not; and the Church became a secret association.<sup>1</sup> Later the Lord's Prayer and the formula of baptism became a pass word (σύμβολον), which was kept from the catechumens until shortly before baptism.

Likewise the Lord's Supper in time assumed the character of a mystery. Ignatius, Justin, and Irenaeus, all natives of the East and familiar with pagan mysteries, ascribe an extraordinary efficacy to its celebration. The elements were believed to become the flesh and blood of Christ,<sup>2</sup> or to take on a heavenly nature in addition to the earthly, whereby the partaker gained the hope of eternal resurrection.<sup>3</sup> Ignatius early in the century had called the bread "the medicine of immortality and antidote against death."<sup>4</sup> As such it had a magic value.

If time and subject allowed, we might draw further illustrations of the influence of paganism from the calendar of the Church, which would show how pagan festivals were supplanted by Christian; or we might examine the list of accepted saints, some of whom have heathen origins — others are composites, so to speak; or again we might turn to Christian art and see how

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Celsus' charges, Origen, *C. Cel.* 1, 1, and Origen's reply, *ibid.*, 1, 7. Origen defends an esoteric Christianity by the examples of philosophy and the pagan mysteries.

<sup>2</sup> Justin, *Apol.* I, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Iren., *Adv. Haer.* IV, 31, 4; frg. 36 Harvey. <sup>4</sup> Ignatius, *ad Eph.* 20.



pagan types were adapted to Christian uses. But although such studies might prove interesting, we may not enter on them now, for we have already departed somewhat from our proper theme.

Yet great as the influence of the pagan environment was on Christianity, there is always a possibility that in such a study as the present we may get a wrong point of view. We should remember that Christianity was a positive religion, which in being transformed into a Greek philosophy did not lose its own character; indeed it was not obscured by the Greek intellectual habit, but it appropriated that habit and in the end made it its own. Pagan thought and practice affected Christianity in countless ways, but they did not overwhelm it. Nor must we underestimate the service which paganism rendered the faith which was to overthrow it. The philosopher's long search for a rule of life, the Greek and oriental mysteries, and the mystic theosophies, all provided an environment ready and favorable to Christianity. The rapid spread of this new religion, at first in Syria and Asia Minor, was not due simply to the propinquity of these countries to Palestine. They had been for centuries familiar with mystic religions which in a crude way aimed to give what Christianity promised in nobler fashion. The same thing was true in a measure of the great centers of the West. Without an environment already prepared for it Christianity would have had a very different history from the one we know. Moreover we have now abundantly seen how Greek rhetoric and philosophy furnished the forms by which



Christianity made itself understood, and how they gave the intellectual weapons by which in part it gained its victory over paganism.

Now we may ask what were some of the chief reasons for Christianity's triumph. Sometimes it is lightly said that its victory was due to the fact that it "promised immortality to a hopeless world." But we know that there were many contemporaneous religions which promised immortality and that the world was not without hope. We must try to look somewhat more deeply, and we cannot limit ourselves wholly to intellectual causes.

The first, although not the most significant, reason may be found in the positive and noble monotheism of Christianity. Other religions by syncretistic processes arrived at a doctrine of the unity of the Divine, of one God who embraced in himself a multitude of divinities; but the new faith, supported by its Jewish inheritance, taught that God was but One and that there was no other.

Yet the most important causes are to be found in the person and mission of Jesus. He brought a new revelation of God to men; and it was a revelation which men believed the Old Testament had foretold. The Jewish Scriptures were the one body of sacred writings known to the Greco-Roman world, and their authority was enormous wherever anti-Jewish prejudices were overcome, or when, as in Christian thought, Jesus was related to its prophecies. This influence had extended

to Greeks, especially in such places as Alexandria, long before Jesus began his ministry. Therefore it was natural that the Gentiles' desire for revelation as well as the Jews' Messianic hopes should be attached to the Old Testament, so that Christianity had the support of its weighty authority.

Again Christianity knew its saviour and redeemer not as some god whose history was contained in a myth filled with rude, primitive, and even offensive elements, as were the stories of Attis, of Osiris, and to a degree of Dionysus. Such myths required violent interpretation to make them acceptable to enlightened minds. On the contrary the Christian saviour had lived and associated with men whose minds and senses had apprehended his person, acts, and character. These witnesses had transmitted their knowledge directly, and they had testified that the life of Jesus corresponded to his teachings. Jesus was then an historical, not a mythical being. No remote or foul myth obtruded itself on the Christian believer; his faith was founded on positive, historical, and acceptable facts.

Christianity showed a superior power of adaptation to every class; it was a practical guide of life for all, a guide which was soon recognized by its opponents to be of the highest ethical value. In spite of the human weaknesses of Christians, their superior morality was generally recognized from the time of Pliny.<sup>1</sup> Their motives for righteous living sprang from love and faith rather than from any social or rational sanctions; and

<sup>1</sup> Plin., *Ep.* X, 96.

the fruits were "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." These virtues and the belief that Christ's revelation and the mystic union of man with the Divine brought salvation, could be understood by the most unlettered. The intellectual classes found Christianity fulfilling the aim of both Greek thought and of Old Testament prophecy; in it they saw the ultimate philosophy. Christianity therefore proved itself a religion which satisfied men's desires and hopes as well as their philosophic aims in a more complete and spiritual way than oriental mysticism or Greek rationalism; and it gave a nobler assurance of salvation.

Finally, experience taught the value of Christianity; already in the second century the Apologists could make the appeal to common knowledge of the Christians to show the superiority of their faith.

Yet by the close of the second century Christianity had not won many adherents outside of Syria and Asia Minor, save in the greater cities. The third century was the period in which paganism rapidly decayed and Christianity swiftly advanced toward its triumph; by the year 300 it had filled the Mediterranean world, and the proud claim which Tertullian had made a century before, began to be justified: "We are of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your holdings, cities, houses, castles, towns, councils, your very camps, tribes, wards, the palace, the senate, the forum — we have left you only your temples."<sup>1</sup> The victory over pagan

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.* 37.

religions and philosophies was indeed certain; but this success had been secured on the intellectual side by the transformation of the teachings of Jesus and of the apostles into a Greek philosophy. It is as such that Christianity has the final place in a history of Greek religious thought.





## APPENDIX I

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## APPENDIX II

### SPECIMEN OF A ROMAN CALENDAR

Taken from the *Fasti Praenestini*, which were composed between  
4 and 10 A.D.

THE letters of the first column show the eight days of the Roman *nundinae*, which are repeated for the successive nundinal periods; the second column gives the number of days before the Calends, Nones, or Ides as the case may be; in the third column the character of the day is indicated by C = *comitialis*, F = *fastus*, N and NP = *nefastus*, and the oldest festivals are given: VIN = *Vinalia*, ROB = *Robigalia*, etc.; the small capitals give the festivals added within the historical period and sundry other notices.



A	VIII	VIN F	[VINI OMNIS NOVI LIBAMENTVM IOVI] CONSECRATVM[EST CVM LATINI BELLO PREME] RENTVR AB RVTILIS QVIA MEZENTIVS REX ETRVSCOVRVM PACISCEBATVR SI SVBSIDIO VENISSIT OMNIVM ANNORVM VINI FRVCTVM SIG DIVO AVGVSTO PATRI AD THEATRVM MARC[ELLI] IVLIA AVGVSTA ET TI AVGVSTVS DEDICARVNT
B	VIII	CTI	CAESAR TOGAM VIRILEM SVMPSIT IMP CAESARE VII AGRIPPA III COS
C	VII	ROB NP	FERIAE ROBIGO VIA CLAVDIA AD MILLIARIVM V NE ROBIGO FRVMINTIS NOCEAT SACRIFICIV[M] ET LVDI CVRSORIBVS MAIORIBVS MINORIBVSQ FIVNT FESTVS EST PVERORVM LLNONIORVM QVIA PROXIMVS SVPERIOR MERETRICVM EST
D	VI	F	HVNC DIEM DIVVS CAESAR ADDIDIT
E	V	C	
F	III	NP	LVDI FLORAE FERIAE EX S C QVOD EO DIE AEDICVLJA ET [ARA] VESTAE IN DOMV IMP CAESARIS AVGVSTI POINTIF MA[X] DEDICATAST QVIRINIO ET VALGIO COS EODEM DIE AEDIS FLORAE QVAE REBVS FLORESCENDIS PRAEEST DEDICATA EST PROPTER STERILITATEM FRVGVM
G	III	C	LVDI
H	PR	C	LVDI
XXX			



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